

THE BOOK OF GILLY

FOUR MONTHS OUT OF A LIFE

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THE BOOK OF GILLY

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

HURRISH.

GRANIA.

MAELCHO.

WITH ESSEX IN IRELAND.

MAJOR LAWRENCE, F.L.S.

PLAIN FRANCES MOWBRAY.

TRAITS AND CONFIDENCES

WITH THE WILD GEESE. Poems.



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"Through his brain swung the sense of masses in the act of slow movement."

THE BOOK OF GILLY

FOUR MONTHS OUT OF A LIFE

BY

EMILY LAWLESS
(HON. LITT.D.)

AUTHOR OF "HURRISH," "GRANIA," ETC.

WITH FOUR ILLUSTRATIONS BY L. LESLIE BROOKE

LONDON
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1906

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TO

E. F. M.

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P A R T I

THE BOOK OF GILLY

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCES THE PARENTS OF THE HERO TO THE READER

I TELL you, Cynthia, I don't mean the boy to grow up knowing nothing of Ireland," Gilly's father said positively.

"But there'll be no time for him to have grown up! We're not going to India for ever! The appointment, thank Heaven, is only a five years' one. In five years he'll be barely fourteen. You can take him to Ireland yourself then, and put him to sleep in the bogs if you think it would be an advantage to him!" Gilly's mother looked up out of her sofa cushions quite good humouredly at his father.

"He'll have to go to Eton before that."

"And you think Eton and the bogs incompatible?"

"More or less. Eton gives a set of its own to a boy's mind, as you very well know."

"Thank goodness it does, or where would any of you have been? You don't want Gilly not to have that set, do you?"

"I don't say that, but I want him to have a few other

ideas in his little niddle-noddle as well. There are some two or three notions knocking about the universe besides those of Eton and—this place.” He waved his hands vaguely in the direction of the neighbouring house-tops.

The talk was taking place upon a Sunday morning, in the chintz-shrouded upstairs sitting-room of a good-sized house in Mayfair. The windows of that sitting-room looked to the back, into what was humorously called a garden. It was April, and the two plane trees which filled that garden were already beginning to discuss their summer toilettes, and were whispering confidential details to one another, as they swayed their still leafless tips and last season’s tassels to and fro against the panes of glass.

“Camilla is quite ready to have both children for the whole time that we are away,” Gilly’s mother presently observed.

“It is uncommonly good of Camilla, of course, only——”

“Only what?”

“Well for one thing there’s Hubert to be considered. How would he like looking after a little shrimp of a boy like Gilly?”

“I don’t see that there would be much of what you call ‘looking after,’ at anyrate for some time to come. Mrs. Brown does well enough for the moment, and then there’s that tutor coming later on, and in a year I suppose he will have to go to some preparatory school for Eton.”

“Still there are such things as holidays!” Gilly’s father lay back in his chair, and looked meditatively out of the window. Then he went on rather suddenly:

"I can't expect you to see it as I do, Cynthia, or perhaps to see it at all, but I can only tell you that I wouldn't have missed those times I used to spend in Kerry myself when I was Gilly's age; not for—for anything you could give me!"

"It was your mother that put it into your head to think so much about Ireland, wasn't it?" Lady Dunkerron asked. "I have always heard she was devoted to it. It seems so odd, too, when she wasn't Irish herself. She liked being in Kerry better than anywhere, didn't she?"

"Yes." There was an emphasis about the word that seemed greater than the occasion called for, as, with hands still behind his head, Gilly's father continued to stare out of the window at the swaying plane trees.

"When I look back," he presently went on—"when I look back, and remember how her whole time used to be spent riding or walking about the hills there; in and out of all the cabins; sitting for hours at a time in the chimney corners; knowing every man, woman, and child in the place as well as—in fact a lot better—than you know your own cousins. Remembering too how I used to scuttle round like a small dog at her heels; listening to the old people's stories, yes and believing in them, by Jove! lying out for hours at a time on the rocks, sniffing at the Atlantic; getting all sorts of notions into my stupid little head, and scraping acquaintance with everything and everybody, down to the very puffins; remembering all that, it makes me sick, Cynthia, nothing short of sick, to think of that unfortunate little Gilly-boy being stuck the whole time we are away in India with his nose in the machinery here!"

"His nose in the machinery! My dear Shan, what

very odd expressions you use! Whose nose is in the machinery? Is mine? Is Camilla's?

"Of course they are! All our noses are for that matter! As for Camilla, she and Hubert live at the very heart and centre of the machine, just where the grind and the whirl of it is at its worst. They don't realise it, I suppose, but so it is; in fact, I don't believe either of them have ever been out of it for an hour in their lives."

"Don't, please, be metaphorical, Shan. Do explain what it is you mean."

"I can't, I'm afraid; and that's exactly where the difficulty comes in! It is all a question of atmosphere. Surely you realise though yourself, Cynthia, that everything we do here; everything we touch, and plan, and think about, down to our very dreams, is for the most part purely machine-made? Look at the ways of our servants! look at everything! As for Camilla, I take her to be just the most perfect, the most preter-pluperfect product of it possible; the sort of thing the machine exists in order to turn out."

"You're never very nice about Camilla, Shan."

"Yes I am, I'm devoted to her. Besides I'm machine-made myself, of course; at least nineteen-twentieths of me is. How could I ever have held on so long in the House if I hadn't been? How on earth could I be so insane as to dream of accepting this post in India? We're all in the same box."

"What *you* call living by machinery seems to be just living in the ordinary way; living as all reasonable people do," observed Lady Dunkerron.

"Yes, I suppose it might fairly be so described. Anyhow I am not for a moment denying the necessity of it, Cynthia, so don't misunderstand me. The machine exists; it's there, and has got to go on. It's all quite right and proper, and what this country requires. Moreover, no one knows better than I do that it's just the want of that sort of stiffening which has been the ruin of Ireland; which has kept it for all these centuries in its own little backwater. All that is quite clear, only—only—it seems to me that there's a time for everything, and that eight and a half years old is a trifle soon to be turned into a mere peg, or cog, or something of that sort, even in the best of machines."

"Now you're off on your metaphors again! Do talk reasonably. This is a serious matter, and we've got to settle it."

"Of course it is serious, as serious as—Church time, Cynthia!"

"I'm not going to church this morning. I'm going to St. Paul's at three."

"All right; then neither am I."

They sat still for a few minutes longer, listening to the planes tapping out an obligato upon the panes of glass; listening, too, to the "dom," "dom," "dom," of a church bell in the next street, which was being carried reprovingly towards them across the housetops.

"I've been thinking over the matter a good bit this week, ever since that Indian offer came," Gilly's father presently began afresh. "I had meant, as you know, to take the boy over to Kerry myself this spring, and let him see the old places, and finger at the old ropes

for himself a bit. Now, of course, that's all knocked on the head ; but because I've got to go out to India, and make believe that I understand anything about governing natives, I don't see that that is a reason why the poor little Gilly-boy should be cheated out of a playground which is his by rights."

"But where could they go to, Shan ? The Castle has been shut up for ages and ages. You don't propose to unpack it all for old Brown and the children ?"

"Certainly not."

"Then where else is there ? You couldn't send them to your uncle, Lord Rollo ? I can't imagine his letting a nursery establishment be quartered upon him."

Her husband laughed. "Neither can I. You'll perhaps think it a crazy notion, Cynthia, but my idea is to let them go to Inishbeg for a few months at any rate, Old Moriarty, whom you may remember, is in charge of it, and he would see that Gilly got into no harm, if he proved to be more of a handful than Mrs. Brown and her myrmidons could manage."

Lady Dunkerron sat bolt upright, and opened her light blue eyes to their widest possible extent. "You actually propose that I should let you send those two unfortunate children and poor old Brown off by themselves to an uninhabited island ?" she all but gasped.

Gilly's father laughed. "You talk as if Mrs. Brown had ever done anything in her blessed existence except sit in a chair, and give orders to her subordinates : 'Jane, take off Lord Macgillicuddy's socks ; ' 'Hemma, whatever 'ave you done with Lady Janetta's doll ?'—I've heard her when I was passing the nursery door ? Of

course, the whole collection would have to go, including that aspiring young man, Willum."

"But, Shan, people would say we were crazy!"

"Nonsense. No one would bother their heads about it."

"Yes, they would, there would be paragraphs about it in the newspapers!"

"Stuff! Besides, who cares? For the matter of that Camilla and Hubert, or any of your kith and kin that chooses can go there. That cottage will hold three or four extra people at a pinch."

"They would never do that. They would never find the time!"

"Very well, then, if they didn't that would be their own look out. Anyhow, I'm not afraid about Gilly. Mother always let me go about with old Moriarty, and I never came to any harm."

"I can't see things the way she did."

"No, I know; but it'll be all right. Besides, though I admit Uncle Rollo wouldn't take any responsibility in the matter, he won't mind rowing across the bay now and again, and reporting if all seems safe. Don't you worry yourself about it, Cynthy. It will be all right, you'll see."

"I can't say I like the idea one bit."

"But surely you can see that it would be infinitely better for the children than being boxed up here all the early summer?"

"They could always go down to High Oaks."

"If they did they'd be just as much by themselves as at Inishbeg, and not have half such a good time. Besides, I tell you, I want Gilly to get to care for the old places, and to do so while his little brain is still malleable."

"I wish you didn't care quite so much for them yourself!"

"I dare say you do, but so it is. Why were you such a silly young woman, may I inquire, as to marry a Paddy?"

"Nonsense, Shan, you know very well you are only half—less than half—an Irishman yourself! Your mother was a Scotchwoman, and *her* mother was a Russian."

"It sounds a nice mongrel sort of mixture, doesn't it?" he answered, laughing. "However, mongrels have got to live and worry along like their betters! Moreover, if it comes to that, Gilly, you must remember, is an even finer admixture than his daddy."

"*My* people have always been English."

"Very likely. That's exactly what makes the mixture all the greater!"

"Oh, Shan, if we could only take them both out with us to India!"

"Yes, if we could, but we know we *can't*, so there's no use in our worrying ourselves over that again."

"Besides, Shan, Ireland is such an utterly different place to what it used to be twenty-seven or twenty-eight years ago when you were a boy. Every one says that it has altered *ever* so much for the worse."

"In what way?"

"Oh, I don't know. In every sort of way! All that Land Leaguing business, you know, and—and—Parnell, and the Home Rule bill, and Mr. Gladstone, and—oh, everything! You know perfectly well what I mean, you are only making believe not to understand! Even as regards the poor people every one knows that they're not

half so nice and civil nowadays as they used to be twenty or thirty years ago."

"You may make your little mind easy on that score, Cynthy. If all the Land Leaguers in the universe were rampaging up and down Ireland no one would think of interfering with an old woman and a couple of small children."

"Oh, I know that when you take an idea into your head, there's no use in *my* saying anything."

"Don't say that, Cynthy. I want you to see it as I do. Look here, I promise you that if it doesn't seem to answer this year they shan't go to Inishbeg again another one. There! Cheer up! The Gilly-boy will come to no harm, you'll see. I'll write to Moriarty and tell him to watch over him like an old two-legged lynx. And next year you'll be coming back yourself, you know, and you can set anything that's gone wrong to rights then."

CHAPTER II

INTRODUCES HIS ISLAND

“WHISH, wash, whish—sure I am waiting for the sun,
Whish, wash, whish—see the day is scarce begun,
See it waking, see it breaking, all across my surface wide,
As I rock, rock, rock, to the rising of the tide,
As I rock, rock, rock, though the winds are still asleep,
And scarce a living thing’s astir in all my hollow deep,
With a ‘whish, wash, whish’—see how easily you float,
With a ‘whish, wash, whish,’ ‘tis pleasantly you float,
With a ‘whish, wash, whish,’ as I rock you in my boat.

I am older than your grandad, and wiser than the moon,
I lie awake the live-long night, and all the blessed noon,
I lie awake, I dream awake, big storms my dreamings are,
I count them out, I shout them out, to every listening star,
I race away ten thousand miles to wake the other side,
To rattle round its coral banks, and make its icebergs slide.
Then back I come before your lips can utter half a word,
To teach your little heart, my son, to sing like any bird.
With a ‘whish, wash, whish’—sure ‘tis easily you float,
With a ‘whish, wash, whish,’ see how pleasantly you float,
With a ‘whish, wash, whish,’ as I rock you in my boat.”

—*Atlantic Ditties.*

MORNING was coming rapidly on, but Inishbeg still lay sound asleep. It was sunk down into the white depths of a sea-fog, under whose folds its inhabitants showed themselves considerably sleepier than they had any business to be at such an hour of the morning. The fog covered the whole of the narrow Sound which runs like a salt-water stream between the island and the mainland. To the southward this expands into an irregular-shaped bay, in calm weather remarkably like a

lake, with rocky points of land running into it in all directions. Farther on it widens until it has become part of the main bay or "river," running like a Norwegian fiord, thirty miles or so, into the very heart of the country.

It was 5 A.M. and the 12th of June, consequently there ought to have been broad daylight for an hour or more had the sea-fog not been so unconscionably thick. As it was, only the merest shimmer of light seemed to be playing "I spy I" between the sky and sea, now suddenly opening a white funnel which ran like some topsy-turvy maelström into the very heart of the zenith; then the dirty-white fog-curtains would curl slowly round, and shut down again, thicker and heavier than ever. They were thinning, however, and below their ragged wavering fringe the water could be heard moving about, muttering a sleepy "whish, wash, whish," "whish, wash, whish," as it swung its lazy weight against the steep rocks with which Inishbeg leaves off upon its Atlantic side.

The tide was a spring one, and dead low water into the bargain. Usually when that happens to be the case the earliest of the island people to awaken are some of the smaller members of the zoophyte family—hydroids and their allies—whose home there is in the three deep rock-pools which fill the long trough lying between the outer and the inner reef. For centuries and centuries, more centuries than any one can reckon, their little stony incrustations have been steadily covering the bottom and sides of those three pools, advancing at the rate of very nearly three inches in the century, until not a speck of the original surface of the rock is anywhere now to be seen. On that particular morning even the hydroids were still sound

asleep ; not a feathery fan of all their myriads had yet moved ; not one of their millions of grey stoppers had been pushed aside from the mouth of its stony tube. At last a single one of these might have been seen to vibrate for a moment, and a tiny red plume to slip tentatively out. Apparently the report was favourable, since more and more stoppers began, to be first tilted, then thrust aside, and more and more small pink, orange, or cherry-coloured fans began waving up and down, till the whole surface of the pools was alive with them.

By this time the rest of their inhabitants were nearly all awake and astir. An old red starfish, cut apparently out of a piece of Russia leather, who was generally regarded as their patriarch, had unhooked its crowd of stumpy suckers from the crevice in which it had spent the night, and was wandering aimlessly from side to side, stretching its blunt rays, and inconveniencing every one, as it pushed them hither and thither in search of scraps for breakfast. Then a limpet began to gape, and, as if at an appointed signal, all the mussels belonging to the lower bunches, those within reach of the water, began to do so also, pushing out audibly their slimy black mantles, and thrusting each in front of him a curly purplish foot like a tongue. A Broad-claw crab scuttled across the bottom of a pool ; some tiny shore ones, still in their first innocent pea-green coats, hopped nimbly over its edge ; and a ghostly prawn, a thing constructed evidently of air and water only, stretched out two phantom arms, and flitted like an embodied dream across the sea-weeds, the veinings of which continued all the while to be perfectly visible between the transparent platings of its back.

It was like the beginning of the world over again ! First zoophytes, then echinoderms, then shell-fish, then crustaceans. Finally, as the fog lifted and the sea became visible as well as audible, out by scores from their holes in the ledges overhead scuttled the puffins, and began preening feathers, and turning awkward parrot-heads from side to side, preparatory to tumbling clumsily into the air, where a few jerky ill-directed flights brought them all croaking, scuffling, and scolding, back to their holes upon the ledges again.

Seeing that Inishbeg boasts of no four-legged beasts, it looked as if the progress of evolution was destined that morning to end with the puffins. About half-past six, however, a grey head, with slightly drooping ears, and remarkably bright eyes, might have been seen to look over the edge of the rocks for a moment, then to disappear, and a minute or two later to reappear, the grey body and wiry legs which belonged to the head being silvered completely over with fog and cobwebs. Then another head, this time not in the least a grey one, appeared in the same place, and a small boy, wearing a knickerbocker suit buttoned quite ingeniously awry, and with red stocking legs, of which one was protected by a leathern gaiter, while the other was not, stood breathlessly upon the top of the rocks. Triumphant evasion, and a sense of successful misconduct were written legibly both upon boy and dog !

Now, though a mere baby in arms as compared with some of its larger and ruggeder neighbours, Inishbeg possesses quite a respectable degree of steepness upon its Atlantic side. Moreover, to reach those tide-pools with which we have already been making acquaintance, entailed

a scramble downwards of some seventy or eighty feet, over loose fragments of shale and mica-schist, slimy as fish-scales, and extremely prone to give way under incautious feet. Happily, the thoughts of the small boy who had just arrived upon the brink were fixed that morning upon higher game than starfishes or crabs, which under the circumstances was quite as well. After pausing for a moment to recover his breath, he began to clamber in an eminently sprawling and unscientific fashion along the ledge of a big outstretched reef of rocks that here overlapped the region of the tide-pools, as the eaves of a house overlap a road, and between deep gaps in which the surge, rising and falling with a steady breathing movement, revealed its liquid malachite to a depth of several fathoms.

Finn and Gilly—I take them in what seems their natural order of precedence—had been only two days on Inishbeg, but those two days had abounded in incident, and in incident of a type calculated not a little to enlarge their previous stock of ideas. The former, though modestly silent upon the subject, might have boasted some previous experience, his earliest puppyhood having been passed in the south of Ireland. His two-legged ally had no such reminiscences to fall back upon, but forty-eight hours had sufficed to streak his horizon with more lights than months, perhaps years, in his Brook Street nursery would ever have set there. The day before, the very day after his arrival, an extraordinary piece of good luck had befallen him. He had been taken the round of the island by Mr. Moriarty, its white-headed guardian, followed by peremptory orders from Mrs. Brown never to let go of that gentleman's hand for a moment. Arrived at this, the

farthest point of it, not only had he then and there been introduced to puffins, sea-gulls, black currags bobbing like fat sea-monsters upon the surface, and other interesting objects, but a pair of full-grown seals, sleek-backed and dog-headed—remarkably, Gilly thought, like two wet Newfoundland dogs whose paws had turned to fins—slid from off an outlying reef, and without a splash dropped into the water, and disappeared in the direction of the open sea.

From that moment his thoughts remained glued to the desire of seeing those seals again, if possible at closer quarters. They did not often come so near to Inishbeg, so Mr. Moriarty had told him, preferring the outlying illauns and carrigeens—rocks and islets—where nobody lived, and which even fishing-boats rarely touched. That year the herring had come higher up the Kenmare River than usual, and the seals had come after the herring shoals. In an incautious moment it had been further revealed to him that quite early in the morning, about sunrise hour, was the likeliest time to see them. Confiding his intentions to no one but Finn, Gilly had silently made his own dispositions overnight, and, what was more surprising, had awakened early enough to carry them into effect. When he opened his eyes, the daylight was still only feebly struggling in, impeded alike by the fog without, and by the piece of green moreen pinned by Mrs. Brown's orders across his window. That Finn and he were to occupy a room to themselves had formed part of the previous arrangements. Although the door of that room was ajar, and opened into a larger one, that in which the small Jan slept with her two guardians, the dog and boy had succeeded by a miracle in slipping

unheard into the passage. The rest was easy. To get into the dining-room ; to push open its window, secured only by an easily negotiable hasp ; to slip from there on to the soaking grass, and scuttle noiselessly seaward, took barely a couple of moments. They were gone, leaving the unsuspecting Mrs. Brown and her lieutenant "Hemma" to sleep out their sleep undisturbed.

To clamber as far along this particular reef as Mr. Moriarty had taken him yesterday was in Gilly's opinion the first thing now to do. Along it the pair of red stockings therefore proceeded, watched with no little dissatisfaction by Finn, who declined to follow them beyond the last tuft of hungry-looking sea-thrift. To assert that it was the safest position in the world for a small person just out of his bed, and whose eyelids nothing but sheer resolution hindered from dropping back over his eyes, would have been rash. Happily the reef sloped landward rather than seaward, and the particular ledge along which the boy was creeping was broad—broad enough and gritty enough to afford a decent foothold. Here accordingly he lay down, as close to the edge as he could contrive to get, his eyes fixed determinately upon the seal-rocks, much further out of the water at present than they had been the day before.

The water below rose and fell with large sleepy gurglings ; the puffins squabbled, and preened their feathers. After a whimper or two of disapproval, Finn settled himself down resignedly to sleep, his nose laid out level along his outstretched paws. The rocks from which the seals had slid the day before rose alternately high in air, then sank down, down, down into the green depths again, but no smooth heads, no glassy eyes were on this occasion

anywhere to be seen. The swaying movement, the glitter, the sleepy "whish, wash, whish," presently produced their inevitable effect. In another ten minutes Gilly was once more sound asleep, his head upon a projecting boss, his red-stockinged legs suspended over an expanse of sheer air, with ugly upjutting points beneath, in a fashion calculated to have produced remarkably sickening sensations in various respectable breasts had their owners been near enough to behold it.

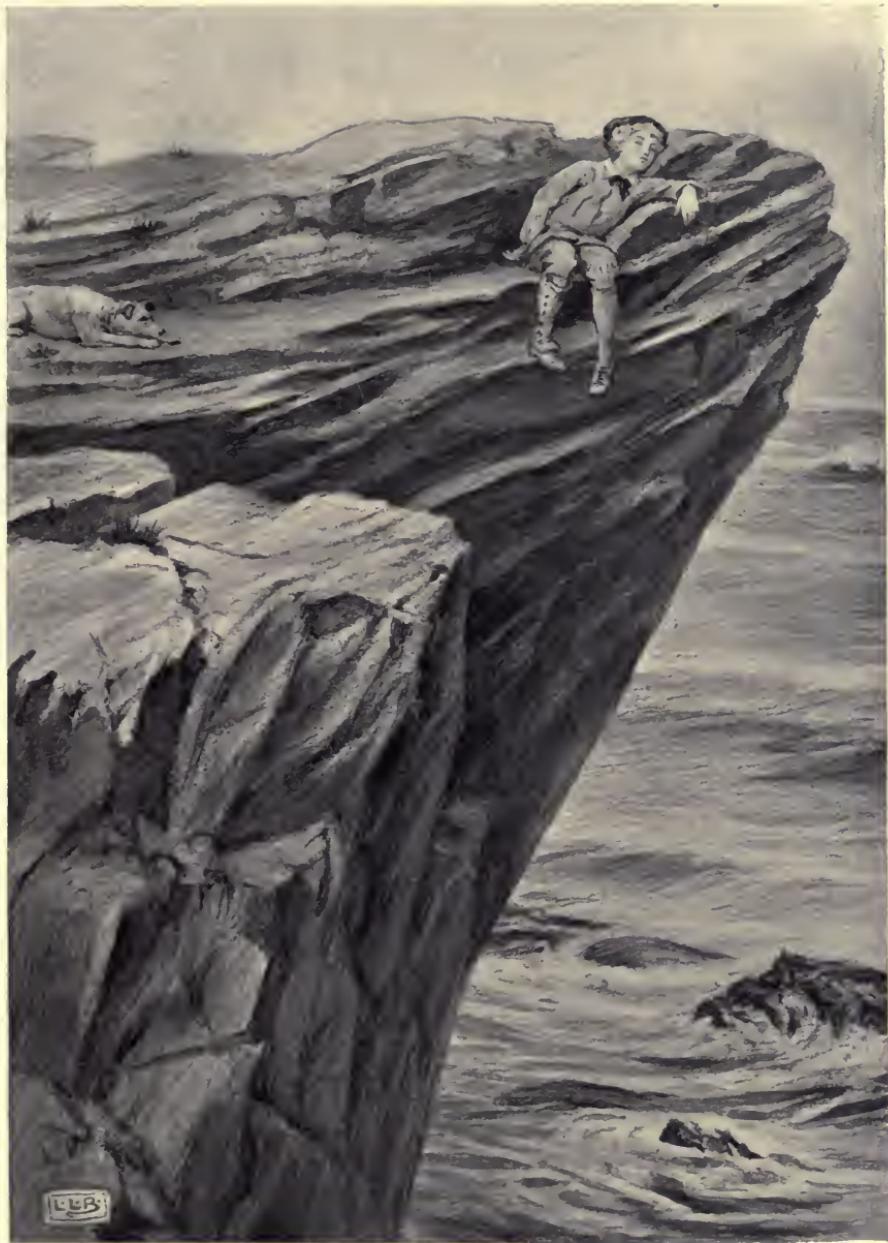
Fast asleep on the rocks lay the hope of all the Dunderrongs, with his head upon that uneasy-looking boss. As far as his own sensations were concerned, there was nothing especially to complain of in the change of bed, save that one of his legs felt even in his dreams distinctly colder than the other. Those dreams also wore a livelier, not to say a more sensational aspect than was usual with him, the seals especially filling rôles not to be found in any of the books of natural history. He was riding the largest of them round his mother's boudoir in Brook Street, and the carpet, which was of a streaky green, kept rolling over him in an inconvenient sort of fashion. Mrs. Brown he found had got under it, as had also Willum, the hall boy, lately promoted to the post of nursery footman. Willum kept croaking queerly, as if he had a cold in his head, and Mrs. Brown had developed a larger nose than usual, as well as a good deal of yellow leather under her chin. He was by this time lying close to his mother; he found, in fact upon the tail of one of her best frocks, and as the seal was naturally there also he wondered what her dress would look like when they got up ; also whether, if the tail of it were cut in two, it would

wriggle away across the carpet by itself, as he had once seen happen to the tail of a lizard that had been broken off. Suddenly he became aware that one of his own legs was being violently clutched and pinched, and that a voice was shrieking into his ear, a voice which he presently recognised as being that of the old woman whom he had been told to call Mrs. O'Dwyer, a person who wore a very large limp cap with a black ribbon over it, and who had been engaged to clean pots, and to do odd jobs generally, about the Inishbeg cottage.

"Well! well! Glory be to Goodness, I have him! Safe and alive the child is, safe and alive at the back of all! Och, darling boy, what took you to run off by yourself unbeknownst to the whole world? Mad you have poor Mrs. Brown, ravin' mad an' destroyed entoirely, the unfortunate woman! Rampaging up and down over the whole place an' screeching, so that 'tis hearing her over at Ballyballahan strand beyant they do be, I'll ingage, yis, bedad, an' further!"

Gilly was by this time sufficiently awake to be able to take in the situation. That he had broken all laws human and divine by stealing off alone at that hour of the morning, he was perfectly well aware. Penitent he could hardly, however, be called, Mrs. Brown having for some time back ceased to figure before his mind as a fitting object for penitence. "Fader," and "fader" only, of the various personages of his hierarchy had of late occupied that rôle. Now "fader" was at that moment on board of a P. and O. steamer, travelling as fast as steam could take him to Southern India.

"I only wanted to see the seals," he said, in a matter-



"Fast asleep on the rocks lay the hope of all the Dunkerrons."

of-course tone, at the same time stooping to rub the leg unprotected by a gaiter.

"To see wh-aat? The sales! Now may the Lord of Heaven look down on us this day, the quare onnatural little cratur!"—This was a pious aside addressed apparently to the puffins.—"And did you see him, me child?"

"No," said Gilly, "I didn't, they never came."

"That's a blessing any way!" Mrs. O'Dwyer rejoined heartily. "Don't you iver look the same side of the road as a sale, or you'll get the blast. 'Tis the wickedest thing in life is a sale! I'll tell you what happened to myself onst, and me not so big as you, no, not by two years!" Mrs. O'Dwyer here settled her back against a rock for the convenience of narration.—"I was streeling about wid only me own self on the say-shore, thinking of nothing, the way a child does, when I heard a bark behint me like the bark of a dog. 'Bow, Bow!' says it, just like that, as natural as natural. So I thought 'twas me father's dog that had maybe followed me. An' 'Taypot,' says I—for that was his name—'Where are ye at all, Taypot?' says I. With that, if you'll believe me, I turned a little about, an' just below me in the water I seen a pair of eyes staring up out of the sayweed, as large, the two of them, as a couple of kitchen saucepans. An' next I heard a kind of a croak, for all the world like the noise a jackass makes, and it about to bray. 'Come in! Come in!' says it, as plain as you hear me now! With that I let a screech, an' begun to run, and I never stopped running till I was within in the inside of the house again, and me back that wet with the sweat, any one would have said that I had have been shwimming in the say!"

To this anecdote Gilly lent an attentive ear. He had not as yet learnt to make his way in and out of the intricacies of Kerry talk, so that a good deal of it was necessarily incomprehensible. "I don't understand," he said; "*who* called you? *Who* said, 'Come in'?"

"Yarra, the sale, 'twas the sale itself! I telled ye so, child?"

"The seal? Seals can't talk! That's all wot, you know!"

Gilly's r's were still weak.

"Is it not talk? Trath, an 'tisn't at talking alone them things would stop! Why now, I'll tell you," a sound of footsteps was at this moment heard rapidly approaching, and Mrs. O'Dwyer's reminiscences were brought to a rapid conclusion:

"Arrah, come away home with you this instant minute, child, or the heads of us will be taken right off our backs, so they will, both the one an' the other of us!"

The bit of arbutus scrub nearest to them had by this time delivered up first a Scotch cap, next the upper portion of a striped pantry jacket, and a tall freckled youth came hastily towards them, stumbling over the loose stones and withered grass as he did so. Catching sight of Gilly he uttered a whoop of satisfaction, and started forward as if on the point of clutching at him. Another impulse, however, overtook the first, and he pulled himself up with an air of propriety.

"Beg pardon, m'lord, but you '*ave* frighted us! Mrs. Brown's been a'most in 'sterics, and has kept me and Hemma running up an' down this 'ere island-place for an hour back or more"—and the newcomer wiped his brow with an air of exhaustion.

That Mrs. Brown had a right to be alarmed by his proceedings Gilly was prepared to admit, and at the bottom of his heart to feel even a little sorry about. Such rights did not, however, in the least extend either to Hemma, the nurserymaid, or to Willum, the promoted hall boy, their views upon matters of the kind not being in his opinion of the very smallest importance.

"What o'clock is it?" he inquired in an airy tone. "I left my watch behind me when I came out."

Seeing that it had been taken overnight into the larger room in order to be wound up, and that it lay at that moment beside Mrs. Brown's bed, this fact was scarcely surprising! The freckled youth pulled out a large Waterbury, and looked at it with an air of importance.

"Gone seven, m'lord. Make so bold, but your lordship hadn't ought to be in this 'ere damp hair another minute! Won't you please come back with me now, and breakfast will be up in a jiffy."

That this was a prospect not without charms for a small person who had been out of doors since four o'clock in the morning is not to be denied. Gilly, however, was just then upon his dignity.

"*You* can go in, William, and tell Mrs. Bwown that I'm coming pwersently," he replied, and turned himself about once more to look towards the sea.

The youth in the pantry jacket gazed at the small back thus presented to him with an expression of profound exasperation. Nature called aloud that Gilly was nothing but a small boy, and that small boys ought, if contumacious, to be coerced. Unfortunately an unwritten backstairs law—even more peremptorily binding upon wearers of pantry jackets

—told him that such a course was in this case inadmissible. Between the two sensations the struggle was severe. In the end he descended to entreaty.

“Do’ee come back, there’s a good young gentleman! There ain’t no sort of sense in your stopping here, an’ keeping the lot of us all the morning from our breakfasts,” he all but whimpered. “Is there, Missus?”—he added, appealing to Mrs. O’Dwyer.

“Clutch him up into your ar-rms, young man! Clutch him up this minute, an’ be off indoors the two of you!” she replied vigorously. “What’s thim long ar-rms and legs of yours good for, if you can’t carry a shmall dotteen like that? Sure I’d have done it meself this half hour back, only for not being so soople as I onct was.”

Whether the advice would have been carried into effect or not, the mere suggestion proved sufficient.

“I *am* going *now*,” Gilly observed with dignity, and turned to walk, not without some stiffness, in the direction of the cottage. “Hullo, where’s Finn?” he suddenly inquired.

“Nipped in to his food, an’ shmall blame to him!” suggested Mrs. O’Dwyer, as she straightened her flapping cap-frills, and drew her check shawl round her shoulders preparatory to returning—“Thim bastes do be knowin’ their ating hours as well as ourselves, yis indeed, an’ bether. Dogs,” she continued in a conversational tone, as they turned down the path leading towards the cottage—“Meself rimimbers the toime when there were seven or eight dogs in an’ about of this same island, yis, trath, seven or eight, not a dog less! The lady she was wonderful partial to her dogs. ‘Deed an’ she was partial to all

the dumb bastes, even to the very ugliest of them, so she was, the cratur! God rist her sowl in heaven this day—Amen."

Gilly already knew a good deal about "the lady," but some of these details about the dogs were new, and promised, he thought, to be interesting.

"What sort of dogs were they?" he asked. "Had she any vewy big ones?" He and Mrs. O'Dwyer were by this time proceeding quite amicably side by side towards the cottage, Willum following close behind.

"Faith, big enough for the mather of that. One more especial I call to mind, a rare ould wonder he was for bigness. 'Saint Barny,' I heard the servants calling him, an' a sin an' black disgrace I thought for ere a one, even though 'twas but a Protistant, to go call a baste by such a name. Not that I ever heard the lady call him so—'Nep,' that was her name for him. 'Nep.' Sorrow of me sowl, it seems to be only yesterday that I'd be at the back door, an' would see her come along the little boreen forenenst me own house, an' 'Nep,' 'Nep,' she'd be calling to him, an' the baste'd put up th' ould head of him at her over a wall, as big near, if you'll believe me, as the head of a bull, an' the next minute he'd be leppin' towards her like a harse, with his mouth red in the inside of it as a fire, an' it all open an' slobbering—I'd wonder she wasn't 'feard! 'Twasn't in the nature of her, somehow though to be 'feard naither of man nor of baste, no, nor they of her. As for the childer you couldn't keep one of them in the inside—not if it had the legs under it to run wid 't all—an' she about. Out they must race the minute they'd catch sight of her, tearing at her heels like so many young pullets gone mad. 'Deed

yis, a kind good sowl she was, none better in this mortal warld, wid no harm in her 't all, 't all ; no harm 't all, the poor lady! . . . Man alive! if there isn't Mrs. Brown stravaging up the path from Mr. Moriarty's house, and the girl Hemma after her! Now wouldn't you have thought that a child in arms, an' it not waned, would have known, if 'twas that way you'd gone Mr. Moriarty would have had you back in two skelps? My sowl, thim Inglish is the fools! God help thim, how do they ever keep in it 't all 't all, the craturs? Here he is, ma'am, here he is! an' rale sorry and ashamed it is he is, so he's been tellin' me, the young gentleman, to have givin ye's all such a jaunt!"

CHAPTER III

TELLS OF SOME NEW EXPERIENCES AND A NEW FRIEND

LD Mr. Moriarty—nobody on or near Inishbeg ever spoke of him without the prefix—was a man of a type which some people are inclined to wish that Ireland would continue to produce a little more abundantly. Past sixty now, and a good deal stooped, with kindly blue eyes, and hair as white as the syringa just then coming into bloom, he was, for a southern Irishman, rather taciturn than otherwise, a circumstance which may explain how it came about that, mild as he was, his own family stood in decided awe of him. When his late mistress, Lady Shannagh, first took possession of Inishbeg, it had been indistinguishable from any of the other boulder-covered and gorse-grown islands which stud those bays. Now it had become what, in the helplessness of language, we are apt to call “a dream,” and even the comparative neglect that had fallen upon it during the last ten years had served only to mellow what at first may have suggested too palpably the touch of artifice. Every plant which will grow in that soft salt-laden air—and for the length of that list the reader is referred to the experts—was to be discovered growing in some corner or other of it. An imaginative person might even have said that the entire island itself had become one large

flower. From the group of oaks and arbutus upon its summit, down to the mesembryanthemums which tossed their crimson curtains almost to sea-level, the whole spot wore an aspect of surprising finish, the unlaboured finish of a nautilus or a cowry. Of the original elements there were only the sea itself, and the wind—in summer time the latter often carried petals of the island flowers right across to the mainland—likewise the rocks with their rock-pools, the heather, the broom, and the gorse bushes; while from every space in the waters around was to be heard all day long the wild hurly-burly, the hungry crying and clamour of the sea-birds.

To suppose that these, or any number of similar attractions would have caused Inishbeg to appear an agreeable residence in the eyes of Mrs. Brown or her attendant retinue would have been a grievous error. Whatever had induced his lordship to send her and the dear children to such a place was a theme upon which she never wearied of dilating. It was not her la'ship's doing, that she had the justice to add. No, her la'ship had her faults, she was not the woman to deny it, but she had more sense than to have thought of such a thing as *that*; had spoken of it indeed herself more than once to Mrs. Brown—"And the tears almost in 'er very eyes, only for the markis being that insisting and that arbitrary as few people would have believed of so mild-seeming a gentleman."

Failing a more appreciative audience, these observations had more than once been poured into Mr. Moriarty's patient ears, and it may have been as a relief from the strain of listening to them that a few days later he sug-

gested that—the weather being so exceptionally fine—she and her little lady and gentleman might maybe like to go for a drive on the mainland, and see something of the neighbourhood. There was Darragh Lake, only four Irish miles away ; quite a number of ladies and gentlemen did be going there in summer time for the fishing. If you walked to it over the hill, past Sir Maurice O'Sullivan's house, it was no distance at all. For herself and the young children it would maybe though be better for them to go to it comfortable-like upon a car.

“ Hotel ” was a word not without agreeable suggestiveness for Mrs. Brown's ears. To walk, arrayed in a certain newly acquired black sequin-covered mantle, into the coffee-room of one, leading a charge by either hand amid the respectful attentions of the waiters, had formed one of those little mental pictures which had gone some way towards softening for her the anticipated woes of exile. One serious obstacle, however, presented itself. To drive again, short of compulsion, upon an outside car, was what, after her recent experiences on the way from the station, she had firmly resolved in her own mind not to do. That any other mode of conveyance should be forthcoming seemed improbable. As it turned out there proved to be another, though a somewhat invalided vehicle, of the kind known as an inside car, which had been discarded from the service of the hotel, and had come into the possession of John Whelan, the local car-owner. Although the top of this vehicle had been taken off, and other modifications made, it was still known as “ Whelan's Inside.” With its too agonisingly narrow seats, its sidelong motion, and its enormously high sides, it was not precisely the vehicle

that a lover of scenery would have selected to travel in. In this respect Mrs. Brown was fortunately not requiring. No creature, unendowed with wings, or with the objectionable agility of a grasshopper, could, once dropped over those prodigious walls, have escaped from them again, and this under the circumstances was a merit which outweighed any number of defects.

The landing-place reached, "Whelan's Inside" stood revealed. For short legs only one mode of entering it was possible, and Gilly, no less than Jan, had to endure the ignominy of being assisted over those cliff-like sides, and deposited in that weather-beaten interior. Seated there, with an elder planted securely beside you, further movement became an impossibility. They started, shoulders first, crab fashion, up one long hill slope, down with much joggling and wriggling, into the succeeding hollow, now lost behind banks, now with the whole shining sweep of the bay laid out like a map, variations of landscape alike invisible to eyes whose outlook was for the moment limited to four small squares of wood, and a larger square of sky. In this fashion, in the course of some three-quarters of an hour, they drew up at the door of the Dunkerron Arms.

When you go to an hotel naturally the first thing you think of, whether hungry or not, is to order something to eat. Nursery dinner not having been long over, and tea-time being still afar, it was not exactly easy to hit upon the right form for these orders to take. Finally sweet biscuits and ginger-beer were felt by Mrs. Brown to meet the occasion, and this it was decided to partake of in a summer-house, which stood not many yards from the hotel door,

and from which a gravel walk led directly to the lake edge.

The sun shone ; the lake dimpled ; the children fidgeted ; even the small Janetta, who was generally docility itself, clamoured to be allowed to play upon that diamondy-looking edge. Mrs. Brown consented. Hemma was to take one of those two well-gloved little hands in hers ; Gilly was to be permitted to take charge of the other ; she herself would watch their progress from the shelter of the summer-house.

They started, and for the first ten minutes all went well. Unluckily a few yards before reaching the lake the path took to meandering ; it grew moreover steeper, and very decidedly shingly. What happened no one was able afterwards to explain. Whether the three started to run together, and at varying paces ; whether little Jan simply slipped, or how the accident befel, all that is certain is that she fell, and when picked up again both little pink knees were scratched, one of them pretty severely. With a promptitude which rather surprised herself, and with a hasty command to Gilly to stay where he was till she returned, Hemma gathered Jan up, and before her first whimper had had time to swell into a full-grown flood, had carried her up the hill again, into the shelter of Mrs. Brown's sequin-covered bosom.

Left thus unexpectedly to himself, Gilly's conduct was for the first three minutes all that was exemplary. He was more or less upon his honour, and had no intention of treating that dimly understood conception with any disrespect. He sauntered on a few steps, keeping an attentive ear for a possible call from behind. The lake edge dimpled

with small chuckling noises ; tiny ripples flung themselves in silvery lines and bubbles right across the path, now grown much narrower, and consisting almost wholly of water-washed shingle. It took him round the first point ; it turned the edge of a steep heather-crowned knoll ; and then it ran away up hill. Gilly followed it. An enormous dragon-fly, the biggest he had ever seen, sat fluttering a pair of amber-coloured wings in the very middle of the path. As he approached it rose, but in a ridiculously feeble fashion, and floated slowly onward ; its wide, visibly-barred sails keeping almost exactly on a level with his own head. A hat clearly was net enough for so poor a flier, and Gilly's hat was promptly off, and a struggle had begun between him and the dragon-fly.

It took him a good deal farther from the path than any one could possibly have believed, through a wide sea of bracken, under whose feathery waves the track seemed to have got itself submerged. By the time the dragon-fly had turned leisurely upon him, and with one sharp paper-like rustle, had passed close to his ears, and disappeared over the nearest bushes, Gilly discovered that he had reached an entirely new region of the lake.

In front, at some distance away from him, stood a house, perched upon a long grassy slope, which ran straight down before it to the water. Was that the hotel ? he asked himself. Seeing that it possessed low creeper-covered walls, and a red-tiled roof, it was hardly able, even in his eyes, to pass muster long as the same bald-faced, slate-lidded edifice which they had lately left. Where then was the path ? was the next question. Where had he left it, and what had become of it ? He

looked behind. The forest of tumbled bracken between him and the lake edge revealed no trace of anything of the sort. Even the marks his own passage had left were fast closing in, as the momentarily disturbed fronds rose once more to their full height. On three sides their smooth reddish stems and feathery tops, rising high above his own head, were all that were to be seen.

A qualm of sudden dismay overtook Gilly. An old, and once agonisingly familiar impression of being lost, utterly and hopelessly lost, seemed to leap upon him suddenly as some wild beast might leap out of a lurking-place. He drove it away again, however, as a person not far short of nine years old was bound to do. Lost ? Wubbish ! People were never lost, he told himself indignantly ! Still there remained the question—Where was he ? He set himself to work that question out. To go back to the lake would clearly, he decided, be a mistake. Better push on up hill, where the ground, he could see, was less overgrown. Once at the top, he would certainly be able to make his way more quickly along, and so reach the summer-house, in all probability before his absence from the lake-edge was discovered. The first thing obviously was to reach the top, and he set himself to assail the bracken host.

Unfortunately going up hill seemed to be the one thing which that unreasonable ground refused to allow of ! Instead of doing so he found himself forced to follow a sort of ledge, running nearly parallel to the edge of the lake. Happily the walking here was easier ; the brambles and bracken were giving place to scattered trees, set at tolerable distances from one another. Ahead

he could even make out another path, one which apparently led towards the house with the red roof. He had by this time attained an open space which enabled him to get along quicker, always unfortunately in the direction of that new house, never in that of the hotel. A feeling of some slight dismay as to what was going to be the end of this adventure now began to assail him. Mrs. Brown's displeasure was an element also to be thought of, but at present this lay rather in the background than the foreground of his thoughts.

Suddenly he stopped short, and stared hard. Something new and unlooked for, something that struck him as decidedly interesting, had revealed itself. Between two boughs of a good-sized oak, standing a little way back from the track, hung an odd-looking contrivance of netting and ropes, which, never having seen one before, Gilly did not recognise to be a hammock. A swing-bed of some sort he could see that it was, and in that swing-bed lay a man, with a large railway rug tucked up to his chin. The man was young—even according to his own standard of age—and had a thin whitish face, almost like a girl's face, he thought. He had a cap on his head, a book in his hands, and a paper cigar in his mouth. He looked a harmless kind of a man, and even, Gilly decided, rather a pleasant one, and he went a few steps farther on in order to see him more distinctly.

Suddenly a rotten twig broke under his foot. At the noise it made the man in the swing-bed lifted his head from his book, and caught sight of him.

"Hullo! Why, it's a boy! a small boy! And where, may I inquire, did you spring from, young man? Out

of the trees, or the lake?" Then, as Gilly, rather embarrassed, went slowly forward, without answering—"Won't you tell me your name?" he asked.

"Gilly."

"Oh, it's Gilly, is it? And what else besides Gilly?"

Now this, as it happened, was rather a poser! Gilly had never been quite sure whether he did, or did not, possess a surname! Most boys, he was aware, had one, but in this respect he seemed to have been left unusually ill provided. He therefore merely repeated, "Gilly. That's my name. I've got no other."

"No name but Gilly? Oh come, that's impossible, you must have a surname, you know. All boys have!" Then persuasively, as Gilly merely continued to shake his head, "Gilly's only a pet name. What does it stand for?"

"It stands for Mac-gilli-cuddy." The admission was made with some reluctance, Gilly not being at all proud, as it happened, of that polysyllabic name of his.

The man in the swing-bed laughed. "That's long enough, anyhow, ain't it?" he said comfortably. "Let me see—Macgillicuddy? Why, I thought that was the name of those mountains out away yonder?"

"So it is. They're the Macgillicuddy Reeks."

"And were you called after them?"

"I don't know; I don't *weally* know whether I was called after them, or whether they was called after me."

The remark was uttered with perfect seriousness, Gilly's ideas of territorial nomenclature having been sadly confounded by recent events.

This time the young man lay back in his hammock,

and laughed heartily for several minutes. "Upon my word you are really a very refreshing apparition to visit a sick man upon a dull afternoon!" he said; "and without a brogue too"—this in a parenthesis. "Since you can't tell me your name, perhaps you can kindly tell me where you came from?"

"Of course. I came from the Island." Gilly's dignity was beginning to get the upper hand.

"Humph! That's vaguish too, considering that there are a few dozens of them hereabouts! And how did you come from your island? On your feet?"

"Natuwally not! I drove on a car; *in* a car, I mean."

"No surname! Lives on an island! Came from it on, no, *in* a car! Hullo, Maurice"—a big man, with a large brown beard just beginning to turn grey, at that moment came along the path—"There you are. You've come exactly at the right moment! Allow me to introduce you to a new acquaintance of mine, who I may tell you at once possesses three very remarkable attributes. He has no surname, he lives on an island, from which he came here on, no, *in* a car, and his Christian name is 'Mac-gil-li-cuddy.'"

"'Tisn't," burst from Gilly with hot indignation. "I never said it was my Cwistian name! I've got thwee Cwistian names, but that isn't one of them!"

"There! Three Christian names, but Macgillicuddy, though it's the one he gave me, isn't one of them!"

The man with the big beard had by this time reached them, and stood looking down with a smile at the small intruder, whose head barely reached above the second button of his waistcoat. He had pleasant twinkling eyes,

the boy noticed, and the part of his face which was not covered by his beard was quite brown; also, he wore a large soft hat and a suit of frieze clothes, which, big as he was, seemed to be several sizes too big for him.

"Macgillicuddy," he repeated. "There aren't any Macgillicuddys on this side of the county. Stay, though, wait a moment! Of course; yes, that's it! He's quite correct, Phil, and I don't suppose he has a surname exactly. You've come from Inishbeg, haven't you, small shaver?"

"Yes."

"To be sure. Don't you understand now, Phil? He's Shannagh's boy, Shannagh who has lately become Dunkerron—since the old man died, you know. I heard that he had sent his children and nurses to the Island. He's just got this new Indian appointment, so he and Lady Dunkerron have had to go off there, and the children are here upon their own account. By the way this boy's name is not really Macgillicuddy any longer, you understand, but Shannagh."

"Oh, that's the way of it, is it? Then the mystery is cleared up—which accounts, moreover, for the otherwise unaccountable absence of brogue! Well, that being made clear, I propose that Master Macgillicuddy, plus Shannagh, stops and has his tea with us. It will be here shortly, Maurice, won't it?"

"Oh, but I mustn't! Weally, I mustn't, I've got to get back to Mrs. Bown!—I pwomised!"

As a matter of fact, voices had been heard for several minutes past, and were now perceptibly drawing nearer. Suddenly in a clear space at some distance below them

there loomed into sight the incongruous apparition of a stout personage, evidently both hot and perturbed, arrayed in a large new black sequin-covered mantle, and an unmistakably London-made yellow bonnet. A younger woman, in a pink gown and a sailor hat, followed, while a running contingent of male and female hangers-on from the hotel skirmished vigorously around them.

“I say, Maurice, do, like a good man, go and tell the poor woman that her charge is here, and that we haven’t so far done him any mortal injury,” exclaimed the man in the hammock.

The big man with the beard went off with a laugh, and was presently seen politely accosting Mrs. Brown with his hat raised. They returned side by side towards the hammock, he evidently endeavouring to soothe her, she vigorously argumentative, and breathless with indignation :

“Which I’ve told Lord Gilly, sir, hoften and hoften, that he was not to be a-doing of it, not upon no sort of pretext. And only three days since he promised me as faithful as—Yes, I *am* a-speaking of you, and I wonder you’re not ashamed to look me in the face, you naughty, disobedient boy ! Choosing such a time too !—Your dear little hangel sister having just fallen down, and scraped both her blessed knees, and me having to leave her, and to run after you like a mad woman through the woods, and my lace torn dreadful, as Hemma can tell you, the brambles being that crooked and sharp as I’ve never seen hanything like it hanywhere. And what I *am* to say to her la’ship when she writes and asks me if you’ve been a good boy I really can’t think ! For indeed, sir, Lady Dunkerron gave me injunctions, her very last words

as she was leaving for Hindia that I was never to let either of the children out of my sight day or night, she knowing that they were safe so long as they were with me, and how *can* I do so when——”

“If you please,”—it was the man in the hammock who ventured to stem the flood—“if you please, it was really quite *my* fault this time! I delayed the little boy by talking to him, and I suppose he thought it wouldn’t be civil to go away, as he saw that I couldn’t run after him. He said that he had to go back at once to Mrs. Brown—the name *was* Mrs. Brown, I think? Yes? Then perhaps you’ll allow us to introduce ourselves? Mrs. Brown, Sir Maurice O’Sullivan. My name is Philip Acton.”

Not to pause under these circumstances, in order to make a curtsey—one of those elaborate curtseys rarely to be seen in these degenerate days—would to a person of Mrs. Brown’s breeding, have been impossible. In this evolution she was imitated by Hemma, though in a more angular and tottering fashion, in the background.

“And now,” continued the young man in the hammock, looking round him, “we are all going I hope, to have our tea comfortably together, as I see that Doherty is getting it ready for us.”

A tray had, in fact, by this time arrived upon the scene, carried by a footman, a stout, middle-aged personage in black following with a light stand, which he was at the moment arranging upon the grass.

“Oh, I’m sure, sir, you’re most kind, sir, but really, sir, I mustn’t be delaying not a minute, not if it was ever so, sir, having had to leave that poor lamb, Lady Janetta, in charge of the hotel woman, seeing that I was afraid you’ll

understand, sir, to leave Hemma behind me, not knowing where I mightn't find Lord Gilly had got to!—sitting up to his middle in the lake as likely as not”—with a glance at the culprit—“and having to be carried back all dripping, and me with nothing with me to change him with neither, not expecting such conduct! And I’m sure, sir, you’ll excuse—and some other day, when Lord Gilly has been behavin’ better”—with another admonitory glance—nothing would give both children greater pleasure. Which, indeed, your civility and kindness, I must say, Sir Maurice, is beyond words.”

A few more breathless utterances, and the party of invaders had moved off, Gilly being marched along between his two guardians in a fashion suggestive of some very small coat of arms between two quite disproportionate supporters.

“I like that boy!” the younger of the two men said presently, while he and his companion were betaking themselves to the contents of the tea-tray. “We’ll have him over again another day, won’t we, Maurice, and *if* possible without the company of the lady in the canary-coloured bonnet?” Then after a few minutes’ silent devotion to the buttered toast—“My stars! Think of having to be shepherded day and night by an old cherry-clack like that! Imagine having no better place in which to confide your poor little infant joys and sorrows than that bombazine bosom!”

CHAPTER IV

TREATS FURTHER OF THIS NEW FRIEND OF THE HERO

SIR MAURICE O'SULLIVAN had always been accounted an exceptionally good-natured man, and his good nature had perhaps rarely been more convincingly shown than when he had invited his young invalid cousin, Phil Acton, to spend the entire summer with him in Kerry.

He stood to the latter in a relationship sometimes described as that of a Welsh uncle ; he was his first cousin, in other words, with a generation between them. The two men had never, as it happened, seen one another till some weeks before this date, when Sir Maurice had gone to pay a long-due visit to his cousin, Lady Helen Acton, and had found Phil, looking very white, restive, and miserable, upon a sofa. The accident which had brought about this state of things was always described by the young man himself and his family as the merest trifle. It was one of those trifles, however, which the impish ladies who decide the destinies of humans seem to delight in playing tricks with ; sometimes tossing them behind us, as bubbles are tossed behind an advancing boat, but just as often and just as unconcernedly erecting them into a barrier, over which the frail human cockle-boat gets crushed to atoms. This bit of rather inflated metaphor is drawn, by

the way, from Phil Acton's own repertory, he being apt to indulge in a somewhat large and heated imagery when mentally dwelling upon his own misfortunes. It is a habit with a good many of us.

He was only in his second year at Balliol when the accident in question had occurred. A slip, nothing but a foolish, and perfectly uncalled-for slip, upon some rain-polished rocks during a walking tour, had brought it about —a cause too contemptible for any self-respecting young man to take serious heed of. Serious, however, it seemed likely to be, though whether it meant permanent or only temporary disablement the faculty had not as yet been good enough to decide. Pending such decision, "Complete rest, mental and physical," had been their prescription, and what the carrying out of such a prescription means may be left to the sympathy of all who have ever had a similar burden laid upon them.

Sir Maurice's proposal that he should come over and spend the rest of the summer in Kerry had caught young Acton at a moment of especial gloom and exasperation. Nothing seemed to be happening, or ever going to happen again in the world, except that he himself was to go on sinking deeper and deeper into the direst, grimiest sloughs of invalidism. If a promising young scholar enough as regards the things taught in schools, he had as yet hardly begun to graduate in other and larger lessons not taught in such places, and that so perverse, so utterly idiotic a fate should befall him, Phil Acton, of all men of his acquaintance, had at first seemed too monstrous and outrageous to be even credible !

The spine and its nerves being the main seat of trouble

it followed that his nights were bad, and it was as a place where "no fellow could help sleeping if he tried," that Sir Maurice had especially vaunted Kerry. There had been some talk of a hospital nurse by way of valet, but against such an infliction both men had kicked resolutely. There were any number of capital old women round Darragh Lodge, so Sir Maurice asserted, all of whom would be delighted to take turns in looking after Phil if necessary. That it would certainly not be necessary the sick man had upon his side vowed lustily. It was only the beastly irritating air of B_____, the particular health resort favoured by his doctor, which had got him out of the habit of sleeping. Once in any reasonable climate he would sleep, he was prepared to maintain, like any humming-top.

Whether Kerry did after all come under the head of a reasonable climate Sir Maurice began for the first time to question, when, a few days after their arrival, he chanced to look into his cousin's room towards seven in the morning on his way home from bathing, and found him established, with remarkably dark circles to his eyes, on a deck chair which had been arranged in the small bow window of his bedroom.

"Hullo, Phil! Up already! How long may I ask have you been in that chair?" he inquired.

"I don't know; not long, I think. The light on that lake of yours was simply scrumptious, let me tell you, a couple of hours ago. It's quite gone off now."

"Light? Stuff! I can tell *you* something much more to the purpose, young man! If you're going to lie awake all night, I shall get Anne Hearne to look after you! She

has nothing on earth to do, and would be as proud as Punch of the chance."

"Now look here, Maurice!" Phil Acton began in a tone of vehement irritation. "Don't, I mean there's a good man, bully a fellow! What upon earth do you suppose that old woman of yours, or any other old woman could do for me if she did come?"

"Feed you for one thing. Warm up beef-tea or something of that sort. You'll please to remember that your mother particularly charged me, whatever else you did, you were not to be let lie awake hungry. If you won't have Anne Hearne, I shall come and cook for you myself. So there I warn you!"

"If you wanted to hit upon a plan for keeping a fellow awake—" Philip again began tempestuously, and again stopped short in the middle of a sentence.

A silence ensued which may have lasted for a couple of minutes, at the end of which Sir Maurice, assuming that his cousin was not disposed for further talk, nodded, and stumped off to his own bedroom, a perfect picture of middle-aged health, vigour, and placidity.

That was what was always happening, and what always *would* happen, Phil Acton said to himself miserably when he was left alone. People were kind to him—a d—d sight too kind—and in return he must needs fly into a rage, like some pettish fool of a girl, and try to insult them! It was this consciousness of descending into hitherto undreamt-of of unbelievable depths of puerility that—more even than his aching back or lack of sleep—had made him at times feel as if the persecutions of those impish ladies were really getting

to be more than he could promise himself to go on bearing.

Apart from such outbursts—to do Phil Acton justice, they did not occur very often—the two men got on excellently, excellently, that is to say, for two men with nearly a quarter of a century between them, and with hardly a mutual taste or hobby to bridge that gulf. Young Acton honestly liked, nay, in several respects, admired his cousin; no reasonable fellow could fail, it was his opinion, to do so. As for Darragh Lodge, it was as nearly perfect as a house of its size could be; the immemorial ease of an Irish home seeming to have been met within its walls by a more extended scale of luxury imported from another shore. The easiest of arm-chairs, the most inventive of cooks, the least requiring of hosts, all were there, as well as everything that heart could desire in the matter of horses to drive and boats to sail, should your tastes incline that way. One desideratum, it is true, it lacked, one which under other circumstances had come to wear for Phil Acton something of the matter-of-course aspect of daily bread. To put it quite crudely, he had no one to talk to, nor, failing such a person, had he any books to read. This does not mean that he and Sir Maurice glowered at one another from their respective arm-chairs. On the contrary, they talked to an extent which the latter, who was not requiring in such matters, might, had he considered it at all, have even held to be extravagant. The minor arts of life, including the art of conversation, had never filled any very large space in his scheme of existence, certainly not when compared with more serious pursuits, such as golf or fishing.

Darragh Lodge had come to him about ten years before from an uncle, who had been, like himself, a bachelor and a fisherman. Though Kerry people, as their name shows, the particular branch of the O'Sullivans to which he belonged had not for a century or more possessed any property in that county. His own mother had been English, and his grandmother had been a considerable Gloucestershire heiress. As a consequence Ireland had always appeared rather in the light of an agreeable variation of playground, than in that grimmer aspect which she has taken of late to wear in the eyes of her less fortunate sons. His soldiering days had come to an end upon the death of his eldest brother, when Ploughwell Hall, the place in Gloucestershire, had become his, with an income more than sufficient to leave him free for the future to follow his own devices.

At present he was in the position—rare everywhere, rarest of all in Ireland—of a man whose yearly income is considerably larger than his yearly requirements. Ploughwell Hall was let, Darragh Lodge was only a lodge, without a tenant or a responsibility of any kind. To bring it up to the quintessence of bachelor comfort, as the word is understood by himself and others of his type, had been for some years amongst the more serious preoccupations of his life. Had it occurred to him that houses are the better for possessing libraries, a library no doubt would have been there. He was one of the simplest-minded of created beings, excessively clubable, and excessively apt to accept as final the standards which prevail in such places. Books, for instance, he had always understood to form an unavoidable part of the furniture of certain

large country houses, rather than objects to lie, like cigars, within easy reach of eye and finger. There had been a heavily-shaded north apartment at Ploughwell Hall, all brown calf inside and overgrown laurels without, which had always been carefully avoided by himself under the name of a library. For houses of more modest pretensions a less space-wasting combination of library and billiard-room seemed to him to meet the occasion. Hobbling round upon an exploratory tour of the house upon the wet Sunday which chanced to follow his arrival, Phil Acton had strayed into this apartment, and had found himself confronted with a goodly array of pitch-pine book-shelves, containing—the Badminton library, resplendent in calf and gold ; a row of elderly sporting novels of the “Handley Cross” persuasion ; Smith’s “Kerry ;” some railway guides, a work on Bridge, and then—aching desolation, and two or three spare billiard cues !

It was with an oddly vivid sensation of home-sickness that he had turned away from those book-shelves and had walked over towards the window ! He must write to the London Library, he said to himself, and ask them to send him over a hamperful of books at once. Outside, even upon a dripping Sunday, there was happily no lack of the picturesque to be discovered around Darragh Lodge. The house stood, as already explained, upon a steep-sided little platform, seventy feet or so above the upper part of the lake. Behind it the ground was heavily overgrown with a mass of elderly rhododendrons, out of the depths of which rose a fair number of moderate-sized timber trees. Right and left, two large groups of red-trunked pines—not very common trees in Kerry—lifted

their wind-broken lower branches and solid green tops against the greyness. Save where their trunks barred the way, the eye plunged straight down into the satiny waters of the lake, while upon the other side, where the rhododendrons ended, the heather once more asserted itself, billowing away in crisp blackish waves till it vanished into the cloud-country overhead.

This upper part of the lake belonged, Phil had been told, to Sir Maurice, the lower and larger one being the playground of the hotel and its anglers. Through a gap in the coast-line he could see one of the turns of the river or bay, but only in transverse section, its larger sinuosities being hidden away behind rising ground. There was a pier somewhere down there, where boats and boatmen, he knew, were to be found, also a small harbour where Sir Maurice's hooker was kept during the summer months. Excellent things all of them, undeniably excellent and desirable, only just at that moment poor Phil Acton felt himself to be acutely in want of something entirely different, and none of them, therefore, quite filled the void !

The momentary commotion produced by the small Gilly's incursion upon the scene had done him good, and he had, as a consequence, the evening afterwards talked and laughed, uttered various small japes, and propounded paradoxes in a fashion more like the original and natural Phil. In the course of these he had announced his own intention of promptly paying a return visit to Master Macgillicuddy, and of inspecting his island. Sir Maurice, with whom the literal was alone the conceivable, had caught at the notion, and had insisted that he should do so no later than the following day. If Darragh Lodge was prov-

ing rather too philistine in its luxuriousness for the guest, it will readily be understood that the charge of so whimsical, so really, at times, incomprehensible an invalid was proving no slight trial of patience to his kindly and more-than-matter-of-fact host. The next day, being all that could be wished for in the matter of weather, Sir Maurice returned to the charge in the course of that early visit to the bow window which had come to form the usual finale of his morning's dip. Phil Acton had at first strenuously resisted, declaring that he had grown to be a mere log, and that logs should be allowed to lie still. This time Sir Maurice, however, would take no denial. Tom Devitt, his head-boatman, a red-cheeked and black-bearded giant, was summoned. Elaborate instructions were given as to rugs, cushions, hours for returning, and everything else necessary or unnecessary, and as a climax the boat was ordered to be at the pier steps not later than half-past eleven o'clock that very morning.

CHAPTER V

TELLS HOW CONSOLATION ARRIVED TO A HERO IN DISTRESS

THE same day, only a few hours earlier, a visitor to Inishbeg might have discovered a small boy still comfortably curled up in his crib in one of the five or six small bedrooms possessed by the cottage. Two such cribs stood side by side ; one was Gilly's own, the other had been taken possession of by Finn, whose wiry limbs found themselves cramped by lying at the foot of the already occupied one. The room in question was extremely small, in fact a mere annex to the nursery. It had, moreover, a somewhat battered and weather-beaten aspect, the floor, once polished, being now old and sea-worn, with threadbare mats at longish intervals. Happily the paper was of a good pink colour, the design of it having been apparently suggested by an Italian pergola. There were pink and green crinkled vine leaves, and crooked brown poles, with a lively diapering of birds, lizards, and butterflies ; also two or three long-tailed mice, and some club-horned snails might have been discovered by curious eyes, if looked for long enough.

Half-awake and half-asleep Gilly lay there curled up like a dormouse. He was listening, as he had done most mornings since he came to Inishbeg, to the various patterning, chuckling noises made by the sea against the

bit of island nearest to the house. This morning the wind was blowing strongly from the east for a change, so that those various noises had rather a different sound from usual. The tide was coming in, and he could hear it first thumping loudly, then going through a pretence of slow retreating, followed by another quick return, as if the water was really getting out of all patience, and would put up with such frivolous interruptions no longer. It was so distinct that it seemed as if it must be against the walls of the cottage itself that this thumping, beating, and pattering was going on.

His window stood wide open, for Mrs. Brown had received orders to that effect, and although the curtain of green moreen still hung over it, the sunshine was of a quality to make little of so paltry an impediment. What the yellow streak upon the wall may have lacked in breadth, it more than made up for in brilliancy. Indeed, there was one spot about half-way towards the ceiling where, as Gilly's eyes turned sleepily upon it, the birds and butterflies seemed to be all visibly fluttering their wings, the vine leaves to be swaying and quivering, as the light played yellow fandangos over them.

He lay looking at it with blinking eyes, his thoughts travelling dreamily backwards along the course of yesterday's doings. The dragon-fly was by association the first object to project itself against that formless background. What a monster it was, to be sure! Did that sort ever fly across the Sound and come to Inishbeg, he wondered? Some one had told him that dragon-flies liked water. Would that mean *sea*-water? If so, there was plenty of that about, but not much of any other, so far as he was

aware, except what was to be found in the bedroom jugs. The swing-bed, fastened by red and yellow ropes to the two trees was the next object which emerged into view. What a very much nicer sort of a bed that would be to sleep in than the one he was then lying on! If Fader were here he would get him to let him have one for himself, and he would have it hung up on the highest place in the island. There were a couple of trees there that would just do nicely, and he would then be as far from the house, he reflected, also as far from Mrs. Brown, as was possible. This last reflection brought out a new and a much less agreeable set of thoughts, and at the recollections they evoked Gilly sat suddenly straight up in his bed, and looked angrily down at his two wrists.

They were quite red and rubbed-looking still as the result of yesterday's struggle! As long as the two strangers had remained in sight, he had, from mere pride, submitted to being led along unresistingly. The minute the nursery trio were by themselves he had turned upon his captors, and had fought desperately for his liberty. Mrs. Brown had been in no yielding mood, however, and had held him tight, desiring Hemma peremptorily to do the same. The result had been a prolonged, and a most ignominious tussle! Gilly's temper had completely boiled over. Not only had he struggled and fought like a small demon, but he had been so lost to decency as to kick out furiously, first on one side, and then on the other! A vision of himself arriving at the hotel door, his face streaming with furious tears, and being forcibly lugged up the front steps by his two arms, within sight of various derisive

hangers-on, came across him with a sudden sense of mingled horror and disgust, and he plunged head downwards into the bed, wallowing to and fro and up and down like a small porpoise, as alternate throes of fury and mortification seized him successively.

Shame and an impotent wrath—a wrath all the more furious for being so consciously impotent—held him in their grip, and shook him as though he had been in the clutch of some furious wild beast. He would do something, of that he was clearly resolved! He would run away! Yes, *that* was it, he would run away at once, and never, never be seen or heard of again! They should see if they could ill-use him like that for nothing! Perhaps when he had gone away and been quite lost, Mrs. Brown would be *sorry*! That last reflection was consolatory!

How long this particular paroxysm lasted Gilly could not afterwards himself have told. There was one moment—a moment of quite enormous duration—in which he found himself far down near the foot of the bed, snapping furiously about him like a little mad dog. At length, though not till after a considerable period, he began to pull himself together; to lift his hot face out of the bed-clothes, and to grow a trifle more reasonable. What had he *weakly* better do? he asked himself seriously. That there were other and higher authorities behind Mrs. Brown who could, and would, put matters to rights if they were properly appealed to, he was fully aware. Yes, but how were they to be got at? that was the question. They were in India; fader was in India. Where was India? How did people get to it?

Why across the sea, of course! Every one knew that,

and here *was* the sea! Gilly jumped from his bed, and ran to look out of the window. A vision of himself sailing across the sea; arriving at some pier or other in India; of fader and mummy running down to it to meet him; of their kissing and praising him for his cleverness in succeeding in reaching them, flashed across his brain for a moment like a vision of paradise. It was speedily followed unfortunately by chillier recollections! Perhaps fader would expect him to write first, and to say that he was coming? Now the art of letter-writing did not form at all a happy part of the machinery of existence for Gilly. Moreover the justification which he panted for was here—this very morning; not a wordy war to be waged upon paper by himself and Mrs. Brown, a war too in which he foresaw her always somehow getting the better of him! His thoughts next travelled for a moment to the two men whose acquaintance he had made the day before. There was that sick one in the swing-bed, and there was that other, the big goodnatured-looking one in the loose clothes. They had both been as friendly and jolly, he reflected, as ever they could be. They were sorry for him too, of that he was quite sure, especially the man in the tree-bed, when they saw him being lugged away in that beastly fashion by Mrs. Brown. A wild idea of escaping to the other shore, and of making his way up the hill to Darragh Lough momentarily crossed his mind. Here, however, shyness intervened. He could not even imagine himself carrying so formidable and so unparalleled an interview to a successful termination.

A step upon the gravel outside gave at this point a new turn to the current of his reflections. Mr. Moriarty

was coming along the path with a watering-pot in his hands, and Gilly watched him cautiously from behind his green moreen curtains. The old gardener had a particularly methodical fashion of attending to his plants, and after the contents of the watering-pot had been distributed, the boy saw him lifting first one, and then another flower-head ; looking into their faces with a pedagogic air of inquiry, as if to ask how they had been behaving since he saw them last, and if there was anything he could do to improve their welfare.

A new idea suddenly occurred to our hero, who had by this time shuffled into some of his clothes, and he tapped eagerly though cautiously at the window.

Mr. Moriarty looked up. Gilly pointed towards the front door. Mr. Moriarty thereupon nodded his head comprehendingly, and moved in the direction indicated, evidently with the intention of waiting for him.

It was a very red, and a remarkably oddly dressed Gilly who presently appeared at the door—"Oh, if you please, if you please, Mr. Moriarty, I want—" he began breathlessly ; then stopped.

"To be sure you may, me child, to be sure you may, an' welcome. 'Tis a gran' morning, an' will do you no ha'porth of harm. Stop a minute, though, till I tie thim shoe-laces of yours. They're dangerous things is shoe laces, an' might give you a nasty trip-up. Put your foot on that stone, for me back is none too soople. Maybe I'd better turn down the collar of your jacket for you too, an' button it a trifle about the middle. The air from the say does be fresh so early in the day."

This way of accepting his arrival as the most natural

thing in the world was an enormous relief to Gilly. It postponed the recital of his complaints against Mrs. Brown, which, although a necessary, was by no means a very easy business to enter upon. Like every one else in the neighbourhood of Inishbeg, he regarded Mr. Moriarty with some degree of awe. The very benevolence which shone so clearly out of that long, old, white face, and gazed out of those puckered eyes having an unaccountably formidable effect. What *would* Mr. Moriarty say, he wondered? He had quite made up his mind that he was going to tell his tale to him that morning, but he was just as well pleased to delay the telling of it for a little while. He slipped his hand accordingly into one of Mr. Moriarty's big rough ones, and they started together to make the tour of the island.

This was always for the old gardener the first duty of the day. About a third of its surface he was able to omit from this survey, namely, the western end, where there were no plants to speak of, only the sea, and the rocks, and the gorse bushes, which might be trusted to look after themselves. The whole of the rest of it he regarded as being all more or less in need of his own supervision.

They first went down the path to the lowest point where the flower-garden proper lay. This occupied the entire space of a narrow dell, too small to call a valley, which was attained by a succession of stone steps, and from which the natural growths had been wholly cleared away. Right and left of it ran two nearly parallel lines of rocks, rising to the same level as that on which the cottage stood. Here, safe from envious scud and squall, Lady Shannagh, Gilly's grandmother, had collected the flowers which grew nearest to her heart. Here were the roses, planted by her fifteen or

sixteen years before, and which had now attained a luxuriance, and a turbulent self-management which would have surprised some of their most intimate acquaintances. They were not fixed to any particular rose-beds, although there were a couple of irregular-shaped spaces of ground with a path through the middle, within which the smaller Chinas and Teas had mainly congregated. For the rest, every rock and jutting angle bore its burden. Climbing roses hung from the two sides of the low cliffs, and trickled in white or rosy cataracts through their clefts. Others had clambered up the two or three trees which remained for them to clamber up, and were pushing themselves triumphantly over all the lower branches. In one place, where some ivy had throttled a dwarf oak, a "Dundee Rambler" had followed hotly in the chase, had in its turn got the better of the ivy, and was now seen smothering the whole mass, and expanding in an umbrella-fashion, its heavily laden shoots pointing earthwards like so many blunt spears. The scent of the roses was strong and heady ; the ground had become a mere tessellated pavement of fallen petals ; yet where the little valley widened out westward the air which reached Gilly's cheeks felt quite sharp and cold, and brought with it all the unmistakable briny scents, all the middle-of-the-ocean flavours of a wind-swept Atlantic morning.

"'Tis the wonder of the world how they do be blooming themselves to death, an' ne'er a one to see them," old Moriarty remarked, as he stooped to brush away a handful of newly fallen petals which had collected on one of the steps. "Shtop a bit where y're, child, till I cut a handful, if 'twas only to save their lives, the craturs ! The lady she would have me keep them big copper pots in her room allays

full at this time of the year, whether she was in it herself or not. I'm afeard I do be forgetting it most seasons, never having been handy at such work, no nor partial to it. Maybe now Mrs. Brown, or that other one, the young girl that's with you, would like to have the doing of it, Masther Gilly? If so, just you say the word, an' they'd be kindly welcome."

This suggestion, or rather the mention of Mrs. Brown's name, brought back all Gilly's thoughts with a rush to the point from which they had been momentarily diverted. "I—er, er—pwaps," he replied vaguely. Then, leaving the rose question over to a more convenient season, he rushed full tilt upon the tale of yesterday's wrongs.

"Mr. Moriarty, did fader—would fader—fader didn't, did he, send me here—to be—to be *dwagged* about—*before people?*"

It was that scene before the hotel door which was the real rankling point, the one great and unforgivable offence. This, and this alone, had worked him up to the point of breaking through that all but insurmountable barrier, a small boy's habitual reticence.

Old Moriarty stopped in the act of cutting a rose, and turned slowly, with a sort of mechanical movement of his whole body so as to look at the boy. "Dragged you about? what sort of a draggin' is it you're maning, child?" he asked. Then with sudden anger—"An' I'd like to know who had the right to be layin' so much as his finger upon your father's child?"

"It was Mrs. Brown, *she* dwagged me about, she and Emma. I wouldn't have minded, weally I wouldn't, only for those two strange gentlemen—Sir, Sir Something, and

the other, the one that was hanging out of a tree! Mrs. Bwown catched hold of me, and she made Emma catch hold of me, and they dwagged me, and dwagged me, and dwagged me, oh ever so far, and when we got to the hotel there was some howid looking men standing about there smoking. And I would have gone in with them quite quiet, I weally would, if they would have let me, but they dwagged me right up the steps, and the men laughed—laughed quite loud, Mr. Moriarty!" His tale of woe was out now, and Gilly was once more in all the throes of yesterday's fury.

Mr. Moriarty had listened silently, stroking down an unshaven chin with one finger as he did so.

"Well now! well now! well now!" he said soothingly. Then with a shake of his white head—"Ye see, child, the way of it is this, an' you're none too young to know it. There does be always two sides to thim sorts of doings; two sides, you understand me now, don't you? What was it you did to Mrs. Brown to make her get to pullin' at you like that? Be strict with yourself, honey dear, and tell me! Take your time, an' tell old Moriarty the truth of it, the same as you'd do to your own da, if he was in it."

"I *did* run away—yes I did—at least I didn't mean weally to run away, but I went after a dwagon-fly, and it took me ever so far from the lake, and I couldn't get back, so I had to go on. And then that man—the sick one, you know, that was hanging in the tree—I stopped talking to him, and then the other one came up, the big one with the beard, and then Mrs. Bwown *she* came up, and it was after that, that she, she—she—" At this point the tears, long

impending, were no longer able to be resisted, and Gilly sniffed audibly.

With his large earth-roughened fingers the old gardener took the boy's handkerchief, which had fallen to the ground, and wiped his face carefully and seriously. As a rule Gilly would have resented such an operation as the most deadly of indignities, but to-day he submitted meekly enough. The first misery of embarking upon his tale of woe being over, it became clear to him that he had hit upon quite the right sort of confidant. There was not a single trace of that fiendish sort of grown-up smirking, which dries up the spring of a child's confidences at its very source. On the contrary, Mr. Moriarty seemed to regard the affair from at least as serious a point of view as he did himself.

"I'll tell you what we'll do now, the two of us, Master Gilly," the latter said, when it became evident that the tears, however often wiped away, had a tendency to return. "We'll go down both of us to me own house, an' we'll bathe them eyes of yours with a sup of rain water, the way when you go indoors ne'er a one will see there's been a ha'porth the matter. Moreover, there's something I have down there that'll hearten you greatly, or I'm much mistaken. What is it, d'ye say? Well, 'tis just a shmall bit of a note I had not long since from your da himself. An' what d'ye suppose 'twould be about? Ne'er a thing in this mortal world but his own small son, whom he's sent over here to us to be the King of Inishbeg! Sure a gran' little scholar such as yourself'll make nothing at all of reading it. Only there's one thing I'd say first, so attind to me words, child. Don't get colloguing, nor bragging, whatever happens. 'Tisn't a dacent thing for a gentleman

born like yourself to do, specially with them that manes well, so thay do, the craturs, an' God hilp them. Attind to this that I'm telling you, child. 'Tis on account of you being so troubled like to-day, and lonesome, too, I'll be bound, that I tell you 'bout it 't all."

Gilly—though without very clearly understanding what all this meant—consented readily enough, and they left the rose-garden hand-in-hand, and having skirted with some caution a piece of the upper walk, which might have brought them within sight of the house, got upon a lower one which led directly to the easternmost end of the island.

Here the path ran parallel to the central hollow or dell, and presently brought them out upon the shore nearly opposite the Kilmacrenan landing-place. In another hollow, as well hidden as the rose one though for a different reason, stood the Moriartys' cottage. It was of the usual four-roomed, white-washed type, but quite large enough for its present occupants, which consisted of only the old man himself, his equally elderly wife, and a grandson, Tim Moriarty, one of the "long" family of a son who rented a farm upon the mainland.

Thanks to its owner's gardening instincts the surroundings, if hardly to be called picturesque, were at least inoffensive, a hedge of crimson fuchsias keeping the vegetable ground from overflowing its proper borders. This private patch of garden followed the curves of the hollow, and ran in a steep strip to the edge of the water. Upon this eastern side of the island the sea was rarely rough even in wild weather, as was plainly to be seen from the coating of sloke (*anglicé*, laver) which covered its rocks right up to the region of the thrifts and scurvy grasses forming a sort

of neutral territory, one into which the cabbages and onions from the vegetable patch were not indisposed to stray.

Tim Moriarty, a sharp-eyed, freckled lad of twelve, was loafing about near the door, but started into an attitude of extreme attention upon seeing his grandfather and the "young lard" come hand-in-hand along the path. Gilly's consciousness of his own red eyes suddenly deepened at sight of another boy, but old Moriarty promptly despatched his grandson to the house to tell Mrs. Brown that his little honour was all safe, and would be in with her in half a twinkling. Then he took Gilly round to the back regions, leaving him for a moment in a wood-shed, while he himself went indoors, presently returning with some water in an earthen bowl and an old ragged towel, with which Gilly proceeded rather shamefacedly to the mopping of his eyes. By the time that operation was over, and that his eyes had nearly regained their normal condition, Tim had returned, bringing Mrs. Brown's orders that he was to hurry back indoors, as breakfast would be ready in a quarter of an hour.

There still remained the "shmall bit of a note," but what with Gilly's slowness in deciphering the written word, and what with the fact of old Moriarty's spectacles having got mislaid, that business was very imperfectly accomplished. He took in, however, that he was to be allowed the run of the island, so long as he undertook to remain at a reasonable distance from its edge; also that there were arrangements with regard to walks on the mainland, though what these were he did not precisely gather. In any case here, he realised, was liberty! Here was comparative independence; here, too, was something else—something which he had as yet hardly begun to take

in—a new sense of ownership ; of possession ! Fader had not forgotten him ; the sky had shaken off all its clouds ; and as he tore away up the crooked path which led to the house it was with a sense of exultation which only discretion hindered from developing into a war-whoop.

Little Jan was sitting ready dressed on a stool near the door, a blue ribbon tied under her chin like a kitten. To her surprise she received a morning greeting in the form of a rapid kiss from Gilly as he passed, an attention which she accepted with round-eyed astonishment, being no more accustomed to unsolicited kisses than other sisters. Next, he raced off to his own room, where he was promptly pounced upon by Mrs. Brown, his hair brushed, and his clothes put straight to an accompaniment of loud indignation over his latest act of disappearance. That having been a foreseen incident Gilly was able to accept it with an amount of philosophy which may possibly have surprised them both. The remembrance of that "shmall bit of a note," still more the remembrance of four words—four wonderful, glorious, unforgettable words uttered by the old gardener—lay warm and snug at the bottom of his heart. In the exhilaration they produced everything else became a trifle. Mrs. Brown was herself surprised by the docility with which even her most embittered remonstrances were received. Gilly once more trod upon the very topmost tips of the clouds that morning !

CHAPTER VI

IN WHICH PHIL ACTON IS INTRODUCED TO THE BOOK-ROOM

BREAKFAST over, grace said, and little Jan lifted down from her high chair, the day still lay before Gilly vast, and long, and bright, and vacant. How that vacancy was going to be filled up he was not at present very clear. Lessons formed a barely perceptible portion of the day's doings at Inishbeg. Occasionally Mrs. Brown would desire him to recite a hymn, or do a piece of summing or spelling, but the ordeal was so little to the taste of either of them that it was apt to be cut down to the shortest possible dimensions. Calling to Finn, he once more set out in the direction of the harbour, where there was always a chance of seeing boats passing, and where he was also within easy reach of Mr. Moriarty, in case of any new and unreasonable encroachments upon his liberty.

The alliance between boy and dog had grown a good deal closer within the last few days. It had not reached its present satisfactory footing without some struggle, Gilly being disposed to domineer, while Finn's views as to his own rights were at least as definite as his so-called master's. Happily, save where those rights were concerned, his good temper was unassailable. "Kindly Irish of the Irish" might have been written in due course

of time over his bones, as over the bones of many another equally ragged-coated though two-legged Finn. Something of the rath attractiveness of a wild creature still hung over him, as it does over most of his breed. Generations of untamed or of half-tamed existence were to be read in that predatory eye, in that staring coat, in those long wiry limbs, as they may be read in those of any member of the family whom we meet with rather incongruously to-day in London drawing-rooms.

Like every dog worth his bone Finn had a profound capacity for adoration. Unfortunately for him the object of that adoration had been whisked away to the ends of the earth, and he was still suffering acutely from the deprivation. That Gilly would ever succeed to the reversion of such devotion seemed improbable, but in a different and in a more or less protecting fashion Finn was well enough disposed towards his present companion. When the latter issued orders in a menacing tone he merely looked at him, with his head cocked, and one abbreviated ear raised considerably above the other. When, on the other hand, Gilly adopted a more modest tone, and appealed to him as a comrade, Finn at once succumbed, and in successful evasion of the nursery authorities the two were at once accomplices and rivals.

They now trotted down together amicably to the harbour. There is a suggestion of largeness about that word which seems to require some modification. It was in truth a mere doll's harbour, and might conceivably have been fitted out with a marauding fleet of men-of-war in pith or cardboard. At present a couple of row-boats filled it to overflowing. One of these was an old punt

employed by the Moriartys in their transits to the mainland, the other a solid-looking four-oared tub, which had the honour of conveying Mrs. Brown and her retinue to church upon a Sunday morning, up the little river Inney, which led to that rather neglected-looking edifice.

Arrived at the end of the pier Gilly clambered down its few stone steps, and perched himself astride of a stout post set there for the convenience of visiting vessels. With one arm akimbo, and both legs swinging freely, he sat looking about him at the sea and the rocks ; at the gulls floating in the narrow channel ; at the rooks fluttering about amongst the branches above ; feeling in his own mind as if he were seeing all these things for the first time ; feeling in fact as if, not only the scene were new, but as if he himself, Gilly, were an entirely new person, a very interesting and important one, whose acquaintance he had never really had the advantage of making until that morning.

“The King of Inishbeg!” Those were the words—the four magical words which had worked this transformation. They had been uttered by the old gardener without a thought. The phrase had sprung to his lips, as such phrases do spring to Irish lips, without a suspicion of its being an exuberant or extravagant fashion of stating a plain fact. Perhaps it would be necessary to be a child again—to lift off the lid of years, and to peep inside—in order to realise their effect. The rapture of ownership—most ancient, most persistent of the many varying joys of our ancient race—had grown and blossomed within an hour in this still in many respects childish brain. The boy’s whole standpoint had been altered by it—nay, reversed. Yester-

day he was only a boy, like any other small boy ; liable to be ordered about ; a person of no particular account, hardly in many respects better off than a mere girl. To-day everything was changed. He had come into his inheritance ; into his *kingdom* ; Inishbeg was his kingdom ; Mr. Moriarty had said so, and he must know. It was *his* ; his and fader's —it belonged to them, and to no one else in the whole wide world.

To sit still in a given spot under such thrilling, such utterly intoxicating and revolutionary circumstances was evidently impossible. Springing from his perch Gilly raced to and fro the pier, leaping and bounding within the limits of the space. The wall was high enough to hide him from the sight of any one upon the island, and there was no one else within reach except Finn, who, if he did not understand, did his best to look sympathetic. He felt like throwing his cap up at the crows as they flew by, and telling them that he was their king, their king ! What did Mrs. Brown and her silly old boverations matter *now* ? What did anything matter ? or who would dare to meddle with him once they knew that he was a king ? The clouds overhead, the rocks, and the furze-bushes, the sea-gulls dipping and diving, the entire riotous Atlantic sweeping in from the sunset country—all seemed to be repeating to one another that he was King ! King ! The King of Inishbeg !

Suddenly, at the highest point of his jubilation, an unexpected event happened. The newly crowned monarch was brought down from sky to earth, and fell upon the latter with a disconcerting flop. In his excitement he had failed to observe that a boat had recently turned into their own Sound, and was now rapidly approaching the landing-

place. There could be no mistake about it. Somebody was coming to visit the island !

A sudden qualm of shyness overtook Gilly, a complaint to which he was at all times painfully liable. He was very nearly scuttling away from the pier before the boat arrived, and, hiding in one of the smaller walks, making believe to himself that it was time for him to go home. Happily, he just managed to resist that impulse, and by an effort to hold his ground. He fell back upon the post, and stood beside it, feeling and looking—for a king—remarkably small and unimportant. Meanwhile, the boat had come round the corner of the pier, and had drawn cleverly up to it, rubbing lightly as it did so against the steps of the landing-place.

In the stern sat the young man of yesterday—the young man of the swing-bed. He was not, of course, in bed to-day, but he was still wrapped up in all manner of cloaks and rugs, and his back was propped with cushions, rather as if he were in bed, although the tiller-ropes were in his hands.

“How do you do ?” Gilly said very shyly. He was a little way behind the boat, so had not been perceived at first.

The man in the stern of the boat thereupon turned quickly round.

“Hullo ! why, it’s Macgillicuddy himself ! How do you do, Macgillicuddy ? Did you guess that I meant to pay you a visit this morning ?”

“No, I didn’t. Only I—” Gilly stopped short, shyness again overtaking him.

“Ye gods ! what a galumptious place !” The man had by this time run his eye all round the island—or as much of

it as he could see from where he was. He looked along the line of nearer rocks, wet below, but green, red, purple, or yellow on top, with grass and fuchsias, sea thrifts and gorse; then at the group of big oaks standing in a cluster at the highest point; at the one tall up-jutting piece of grey rock farther still; at the Sound, with the gulls and kittiwakes fighting and scuffling about over it. Finally, back at Gilly, who stood looking very shy, the stones of the pier rising in tiers several feet above the top of his head.

"And where do you get to at night when you want to go to sleep, Macgillicuddy? I suppose you creep behind some big stone, or just tuck yourself into one of those comfortable feathery-looking bushes?" he inquired.

"No, I don't. I sleep in our house. We've got a house up there," Gilly replied, with excessive gravity. He was not at all sure, he said to himself, that he liked this sort of way of being joked about everything.

"Oh, you've got a house up there, have you? And how am I going to get to that house, I wonder? All right, Devitt; if you'll shove one of those two sticks—the smaller one—a bit nearer to me I'll get upon my feet, and then you must manage to hustle me over the edge, and up those steps somehow."

This was done, Gilly looking on, and feeling quite kind again, and extremely sorry for this new acquaintance of his. It did seem to him dreadfully hard that a big grown-up man like that, with quite long legs and even a small moustache, should have to be pushed and helped up a few stairs like a three-year-old baby.

The top of the pier reached, the path ran up to the

cottage door, and he was relieved to find that the man could then walk by himself, only now and then stopping to take a rest, leaning against a rock or a tree-trunk as he did so. The nursery party—Mrs. Brown, Hemma, and Jan—had meanwhile come out, and were sitting all three abreast upon a large garden-seat, where the walk forked, one fork leading to the kitchen-garden, the other to the cottage. Gilly had no wish to join them, and was rejoiced therefore to see that the man did not appear to wish to do so either, although he stood still and made three ceremonious bows, one to each of the three occupants of the garden-seat. Two of these were equally ceremoniously returned, namely, by Mrs. Brown and Hemma, whereas Jan simply sat still and opened her eyes hard at him from under her big feathery hat. Seeing that the distance from the seat to the ground was too great for her to get down unaided that was hardly, as Gilly was aware, her fault.

The cottage was now empty, with the exception of Mrs. O'Dwyer and the cook, both of whom were in the kitchen, and he therefore led the way to it. There were no steps to mount, luckily, and they walked straight in at the front door, and looked into the two sitting-rooms, the drawing-room to left, the dining-room to right, a strip of neat red matting running down the passage between them.

Gilly thought the man appeared a little disappointed somehow, as if he had expected to see something different, although Mrs. Brown's best work-basket was lying wide open upon the table, showing its pink lining, also a framed photograph of a gentleman in evening dress, a relation, he believed, of hers. There were no other rooms to be

seen, except the bedrooms and the kitchen, and what he had learned to call "Grandmama's room," which lay right off at the far end of the cottage, having been built out beyond the bedrooms. He had hardly ever gone into that room himself, Mrs. Brown having declared that his lordship had forbidden it. To-day, however, some impulse made him lead the way to it, and he opened the door widely, so that they might see right through it to the sea which lay below.

The sea seemed to be not only below, but actually *inside* that room! It was very long and narrow and all of a single dull green colour, the colour of old moss when it has grown pale in the shade. Its two longest walls were lined with books from the floor to the very ceiling. They were not, of course, all green books, but they so shaded themselves off that they appeared somehow to be. Every scrap of light that reached the room came through the big end window which was exactly opposite to the door, and was cut low, nearly to the worn green felt which covered the floor. Outside the window the ground fell suddenly away, making a deep hollow creek, or "coose," which half-way down took a fresh drop and fell right into the sea, here beating against the rocks at the bottom. Inishbeg is at this point so steep that the water remains always deep, however low the state of the tide. The big outside waves can also reach it here from the open sea, consequently there are always green tongues of water licking the sides of the rocks, rising tumultuously higher and higher, then falling back in curdling lines of foam, just as they were upon that day when Philip Acton saw it first.

Gilly's grandmother had planted the two steep sides of

the creek with cistus bushes, pink and white ones, which were at that moment in full flower. Cistuses have, as every gardener knows, a habit of only keeping their flowers for a few hours at a time—one falling off, and another opening to take its place. As a consequence there was always a steady rain of petals dropping from off the bushes and falling to the bottom of the coose. As Phil and Gilly stood there in the doorway they could see the small flakes of pink or white twirling round and round in mid-air. Now a gust would come, and would catch a few hundreds of them at a time, and back they would all come flying again ; hovering over the bushes, toying hither and thither in the air like butterflies, finally settling down upon the ledges, or dropping into the sea itself, where they were speedily caught, rolled about for a little while, eventually swept away and lost.

It struck Gilly as odd that although his companion looked at the sea and the rocks and the cistus bushes as though he could have nearly eaten them all, he liked them so much, still he turned away from them almost immediately, and went to look at the books in the book-shelves ; pulling out first one and then another, peeping into it for a few minutes ; then hastily shutting it up, and going on to another, and another, and another. Finally he sat down in one of the big shabby arm-chairs which had been pushed against the wall, and stretched out both feet in front of him with a grunt of satisfaction.

“I say, Macgillicuddy, may I come back again to-morrow afternoon if I can get the boat ?” he asked.

“Yes, to be sure,” Gilly answered readily.

“And the next day ? And the day after that ?”

"Ye—es." This time the answer came slower, and in a tone of some perplexity.

"Every day till further orders?"

Gilly looked bewildered. The ways of this new acquaintance of his were certainly rather surprising.

"I don't suppose I should mind so *wewy* much if you did," he said at last, in a tone of profound consideration.

CHAPTER VII

TELLS HOW THE HERO VISITED THE SALMON-
LEAP, AND OF WHAT BEFEL HIM ON THE WAY
BACK

AFUND of mild, but deeply ingrained machiavellism slumbered beneath Mr. Moriarty's well-worn garden jacket, and like other possessors of seldom-used talents, he was not averse, when a suitable occasion arose, to giving it a little gentle exercise. At the present moment he was fully prepared to do so upon Gilly's behalf, some degree of diplomacy being evidently necessary in order to relieve the strain of the situation existing between that important but irrepressible little specimen of humanity and the careful and entirely excellent Mrs. Brown. At the particular stage of events at which we have arrived it was the claim again put forward by the former to wander about alone and unattended which chiefly aroused that conscientious woman's indignation. In vain had she with the utmost care again and again established the whole of the nursery party upon that semicircle of sand near the landing-place which alone appeared to her to resemble what she was in the habit of expecting to find at a seaside resort. Gilly would accompany them thither readily enough, but when it came to remaining with a tin pail and a wooden spade under her own immediate supervision, he was not, as she

observed to Hemma—"either to 'ave or to 'old." In her despair over these evasions Mrs. Brown was driven to appeal to Mr. Moriarty, whom under happier circumstances she would never have deigned to consult in a matter which lay so entirely within her own jurisdiction. That diplomatist received her confidences with an amount of respectful attention which was at any rate consolatory.

"'Deed, ma'am, I'm sorry to hear it thin, so I am," he replied gravely, when the tide of Mrs. Brown's eloquence had begun a little to abate. "An' yet do you know now"—with the air of a sudden inspiration suggested by her own previous observations—"Do you know now I've been thinking that if you was to let him have a little more of his fling like, an' to take a run now an' again over the hills yander—racin' an' leppin' the ways young boys, you know, will, 'twould rise the heart of him maybe, an' make him more conformable-like when he come back to you."

That such a suggestion did not at all events raise Mrs. Brown's heart, the agonised expression of her countenance showed plainly. "And do you expect me, Mr. Moriarty, to go a-running and a-jumping over the hills with him?" burst from the harassed woman. "And as for me forgetting the difference between a little gentleman an' a little lady, or as for me not remembering that boys will be boys, why it's not a thing I've ever done in my life, never! Hoften an' hoften I've said, when they've been making a fuss over some little haccident or another—'Don't you go for to be a cry-baby,' I've said, 'for I won't put up with it, not if it's ever so! You ain't a-going to be a little lady, sitting all day with your 'ands in your lap, an' never having to take a cross word, no, nor a

blow neither ! How will you ever learn to be a hofficer in the harmy if you're a-going to make a fuss like that over every little 'urt !' That's what I've always said to them, Mr. Moriarty, as all who have known an' 'eard me will aver an' say."

"To be sure, ma'am ! *to* be sure !" her listener hastened to reply soothingly. "Not a doubt in the world but you must know best, you being so used to the gentry and their childer. Only you see, ma'am, the way of it is this. I don't think the marquis would out and out object—that is, if *you* thought proper—to allow your little gentleman to take a run once in a way off towards Darragh yander with me grandson Tim Moriarty, just the two of them be themselves alone. As for danger, you may make your mind aisy, for Tim would stick to the child till he dropped, an' a well-grown strong lad, gone fourteen, an' steady beyond his years." Then before Mrs. Brown could open her mouth to remonstrate—"I'm not saying, you understand me, ma'am, that any grandson of mine is fit to be seen alongside of, nor yet following aither *your* little gentleman, if so be as there was ere another in or about the place suitabler ! Only, as there doesn't seem to be one that I can see, nor yet the signs of one, he might be better, so to spake, nor nothing—that is, ma'am, if *you* approve."

Mrs. Brown did not approve in the very least ! Deep in her soul lay the profound, the ineradicable jealousy of her type and class. Gilly and Jan, in the absence of their own parents, belonged to *her*, and to nobody else. She had no particular dislike to Mr. Moriarty, rather liked him than otherwise, the depth of his old-world politeness, com-

bined with a certain indescribable dignity which hung about him, having won her approval, the disabilities of race and creed notwithstanding. At the mere thought of his grandson Tim as a companion for Gilly her gorge rose. Had there been any effectual means of putting an end to so outrageous a proposal, she would unhesitatingly have resorted to it. She was not, however, without the instincts no less than the prejudices of her class, and she knew in her secret soul that she would have to submit. Careful as Mr. Moriarty had been to avoid flaunting his credentials in her face, those instincts told her that they existed. Despite his eager desire to make it appear that he waited wholly upon *her* approval, Mrs. Brown knew better. Her master's eccentric notions with regard to the bringing up of his son were no secret to her. Had not Lady Dunkerron herself spoken of them, when exclaiming against the idea of the children being sent to this island at all? That Lord Dunkerron was in the habit of writing to Mr. Moriarty she was also well aware. Consequently that it was by his orders that this monstrous notion of runs upon the mainland had been put forward she felt privately as convinced as though the letter conveying such orders had been laid upon the table before her.

Under the weight of such a conviction there was nothing for it but to give in. Gilly's satisfaction, when the matter came to his knowledge, was intense, tempered with a vague impression of something unknown, possibly perilous, which awakened a not disagreeable thrill of excitement. Two mornings after the above-recorded conversation, Mr. Moriarty decreed that Tim was to be allowed to leave off weeding the artichoke bed at an early hour; that he

was to go within doors and to clane himself ; that he was then to put on his best Sunday clothes, and to be ready on the pier, within a quarter of an hour to attend upon his young lardship.

The day was perfect. The edges of the island as the boat pushed away from it seemed to be set with gems of every colour—sapphire, pearl, chrysoprase, and amethyst, all the little sea-washed nooks and angles they passed glittered and gleamed with thread-like scintillations. The air as it met their faces seemed to be vibrating with the honey scent of the gorse, which crowned every little knoll, and sprouted out of invisible holes in all the crags. As they were nearing the Kilmacrenan pier, some home-bound fishing curraghs came past them at a little distance, their black uplifted brows appearing to sniff at the warm air as they floated leisurely by. Hay was being cut on the slopes above, and the voices of the haymakers came to their ears across the water. The sunlight—unwontedly strong for Kerry—flung the shadows backwards in every direction along the shore in bars and wedges of quivering purple.

In accordance with the orders which he had received, Tim Moriarty was careful to convey his charge along as many back ways as possible after leaving the landing-place, thereby obviating the danger of their meeting with any of “thim riff-raff boys and girls” who might have the audacity to attempt to join them. In pursuance of this policy, they mounted in almost a complete solitude up a long and nearly impassable boreen, worn into the deepest of ruts in the centre, and closed on either side by walls of tottering stones. Nearly at the top of

this boreen they encountered a very old and exceptionally ragged woman. She was smoking a small black pipe, which she furtively hid upon catching sight of them, her hand at the same time stealing suggestively out through a large hole in her cloak, as she turned her bleared eyes admiringly upon Gilly.

“My God, isn’t it the beautifulest child?” Then, as both boys tried to scuttle rapidly past her—“Arrah, Tim Moriarty, what ails you to be taking away his little honour before I’ve so much as had the right sight of him? Wouldn’t I want to be aisin’ me eyes upon the beautiful little face of him as well as yourself?” Then as the boys still rapidly pushed on and were getting past her—“Hasn’t your noble little lardship’s honour *wan* copper to spare for the poor lone widdy?”

Gilly’s face, already reddened by the compliments, grew redder still at this appeal. Of money he had not, as it happened, a single farthing. He made a hasty mental resolution that he would insist upon Mrs. Brown letting him have a few pennies and sixpences in his pocket for the next occasion of the kind. That was of no avail, however, now, and as he remorsefully shook his head, he trembled rather as to the form which his petitioner’s eloquence might next take.

“Auch well! Auch well! May One above be good to us all this day, rich an’ poor, rich an’ poor! Dear, but ‘tis the weary road”—and the old woman shuffled cheerfully down hill, stopping at the next sheltered corner, and resorting once more to the small black pipe.

After this the only wayfarers they met with upon this part of their journey were a couple of small children, a

boy and a girl, both wearing yellowish flannel petticoats, who set up a simultaneous howl of dismay at the sight of Finn. They proved, however, to be easily pacified when Gilly, having called him to heel, made him walk discreetly behind. At this point the boreen was left, and the two boys got out upon the bare hillside. Only a few scattered homesteads were here to be seen, each with a single ash tree or a few stunted thorns, their peat stacks lying like small additional shadows behind them. Narrow fields of potatoes or oats, divided by turf dykes, now yellow with ragwort, showed here and there in strips, but for the most part the victorious heather reigned alone, stretching upwards and backwards over the hills for miles.

They were high enough to be able now to overlook the whole of the nearer Channel, and could also see the high-road, a thin white streak running along the shore, almost perpendicularly below them. A few ass-carts, crawling by at the rate of perhaps a mile an hour, were at first the only objects to be seen upon it. Suddenly, with the toot of a horn and a whirling of wheels, a motor shot like a thunderbolt round the corner, taking a party of tourists along the coast from Glengariff. Another toot of the horn, a flutter of grey veils, a cloud of dust, and it was gone.

“Be jabbers, but they do be wonderful *machines*!” Tim Moriarty observed, gazing contemplatively after the dust. “Me mother was tellin’ us only t’ other night of the first toime iver she heard tell of them. She was coming along the road forenenest Durragh Lough, an’ she met Sir Maurice O’Sullivan, he following after her wid a fishing-rod, an’ the beard of him flying out in the wind

behind, like hay in a storm. 'Good day to you, Mrs. Moriarty,' says he as he comes up. 'Have you seen a red motor go by along this road?' says he. 'Have I seen a red *which*, Sir Maurice?' asks me mother. 'A red motor, Mr. Fletcher's new motor,' says he. 'The dear Lord save us, an' what sort of a baste would that be, sor?' asks she. With that he laughs, and 'Haven't you iver seen one of them new sort of carriages that is run wid paraffin oil, Mrs. Moriarty,' says he. 'I should have thought now,' says he, in his joking way, 'that a pleasant upstanding woman like yourself would have been invited to take a jaunt in one of them before now,' says he. 'Whenever I sets up one of my own I promise you I'll give you a ride in it,' says he. 'Keep us, Sir Maurice!' says me mother to him, 'an' is it sittin' over a lit paraffin lamp you'd be expecting me to be? 'Deed, an' with my little family about me, 'twould be a long time before you'd find me taking a ride in such a shay as that.' You might have heard him a'most at Waterville, so me mother telled us, he laughed so loud over that."

They were by this time following a beaten track through the heather, one that was destined to bring them to a particular bend of the river, where Gilly was to be privileged to see the salmon-leap, with the strictest injunctions, of course, against going within a dozen feet of the edge of it. The ground was boggy, and Tim led the way across a long row of tussocks, which rose out of the ground like footstools, the black squelching spaces showing wet and shiny between. They dipped over a heathery ridge, and found themselves in a hollow full of

sphagnum, which took them in over their ankles. It was starred with rosettes of the big fly-eating butterwort, unknown save here and in South Cork. Dry as the day was, moisture seemed to hang over everything like a cloud. The leaves of the butterworts shone with a mass of sticky flies, their surfaces catching the light, and making them glitter as if cut out of solid silver.

A fringe of crooked, cranky old oak trees here stretched away for some distance. Through these the boys plunged, wriggling, one behind the other over the sprawling roots. Gilly did his best to emulate Tim, though his London-made boots were proving no small trial to him, and he mentally resolved to ask Mr. Moriarty if he could not get him some better ones. Leaving the oak-wood they got upon the actual bank of the river, here chocolate brown, with streaks of a lighter brown towards the middle. They could now hear clearly the noise of the salmon-leap, though where they were the stream still ran dumb, now and then curving over in a polished ridge the colour of the inside of a horse-chestnut. The smell of the water-weeds rose to their nostrils. The ground was a mass of burdock and watersage, the stinging, bitter-sweet scent of the latter awaking hitherto unformulated notions from the recesses of Gilly's impressionable little brains.

They were close to the salmon-leap when Finn began suddenly growling and stiffening his back. A sound of scampering feet, and a few yards farther on a salmon lay upon the bank still alive, but with a broken gaff in it. Clearly it had been only just caught, and equally clearly its captors had taken to their heels at the sound of approaching footsteps. Finn uttered a succession of

sharp, angry barks. Gilly too felt angry, he did not exactly know why. The sight of the beautiful pink fish still gasping out its remaining breaths of life upon the bank, ruffled him instinctively.

"They'd no right to catch it, had they?" he inquired. "Isn't that poaching? I wish we'd caught *them*."

"'Tis as well thin we didn't, Masther Gilly," Tim Moriarty responded prudently. "'Tis little the loikes of thim would think of giving us a pair of bad clouts on the gob, or worse itself. Maybe 'twould have been for pushing your lardship into one of them deep ould holes yander they'd have been wanting, an' then what would *I* do? Sure me grandada would have took me life!"

The possibility of such occurrences was new to Gilly, but then everything was new to him that day, and he accepted Tim's views as to the probably murderous habits of poachers as a part merely of this unknown world which he was then for the first time exploring. They clambered down to a ledge of rock close to the edge of the fall, which was the prescriptive place for watching the salmon in their efforts to reach their breeding-grounds above. What the word "salmon-leap" meant Gilly had previously only the vaguest notion, but on the whole imagined that it would be *down* rather than up that the salmon would naturally leap. When, therefore, he saw the first big brown fish slowly work its way to the edge of the broken water, and then, with one great heave of its glittering body, hurl itself into the air, and try, as it seemed to him, to *fly* up to the next projecting ledge, his excitement was great, and when the fish fell back into the curdled foam, and sank to the bottom to prepare for

a fresh effort, his disappointment was only second to that of the salmon itself.

Another, and another, and yet another followed, and his eyes still remained steadily glued to that entrancing sight. Now though Tim Moriarty was unquestionably the leader of this expedition, Gilly was himself its timekeeper, he being the only one of the party of three who possessed a watch. In vain did Tim suggest that they had mayhap better be getting home with themselves, with dark hints as to his grandada's anger in the event of their failing to do so at the prescribed hour. Gilly was not to be moved. He must, and he would see at least one salmon fly from the waters below to the waters above. Until one of them had succeeded in doing this without falling back, he was perfectly resolved in his own mind that he would stay where he was, if need be till bedtime.

Happily so prolonged a fast did not prove necessary. Although not exceptionally high, this salmon-leap was rather an unusually difficult one, owing to a projecting ledge which had a knack of catching and tumbling back the fish, after their earlier difficulties had been surmounted. At length, when six or seven such baffled efforts had been witnessed, one big sixteen-pounder swam cautiously forward to the edge of the broken water, then shooting upwards like the bolt from a catapult, it topped the projecting ledge of rock, and the next minute had darted away, a thin brown ridge showing for a second along the top of the water, before the safe security of the upper reaches was attained.

Gilly clapped his hands with excitement. Finn, who had been watching with some surprise from the ridge above,

sprang up and barked violently, evidently under the impression that he was called upon to do something, though in what direction was not as yet clear to his intelligence.

Tim Moriarty thereupon called on Gilly to redeem his promise, and they turned their steps homewards, the latter turning reluctantly from time to time in the hopes of seeing one more big brown body shoot into the air before the view of the waterfall was cut off from them by the next corner.

They had reached the little oak-wood, and were threading their way one after the other through its tangles, when they were suddenly startled by a loud noise of voices, accompanied by a barking of dogs, and by vehement shouts of encouragement from the other side of the hedge.

Finn flew to join the scrimmage. Gilly followed to call him back. Tim, as in duty bound, followed Gilly. They broke through the briery undergrowths, clambered over a couple of fallen oak trunks, wriggled through a break in the fence into the open space outside, and—suddenly found themselves confronted with what appeared to Gilly to be a large and formidable-looking party of strangers !

It consisted of a half-grown lad, dressed in a tweed suit, rather loutish and clumsy looking, yet clearly neither a gamekeeper, nor yet a farmer's son. With him was a long-legged girl, several years younger, in a short skirt, a boy's round jacket, and a blue Tam O'Shanter cap, pushed back from her vivid chestnut-coloured hair. These two were surrounded by what at first seemed to be scores of dogs, presently resolving themselves into six or seven, a couple of whitey-brown beagles, two or three Irish terriers, like

Finn, but manifestly his inferiors, and a pair of shaggy-coated nondescripts, which might have been retrievers or might have been sheep dogs.

Eight eyes—the human ones—simultaneously fixed themselves with expressions of varying curiosity. Then the strangers turned away, and the youth in tweed set to work to pick up a couple of ferrets whose white snouts and pink eyes were to be seen at the mouths of two of the burrows, the unfortunate owners of which were at that moment kicking under the nets spread to receive them. Gilly—rejoined by Finn—had turned towards the wood, when the girl, after a hasty interchange of words with her companion, suddenly darted up to him, and stopped him as he was about to disappear with Tim into the hedge.

“I say, you come from Inishbeg, don’t you?” she cried.

“Yes,” Gilly answered, and was too much overcome with shyness to utter anything further.

Apparently the girl required nothing further. She darted back to the youth in tweed clothes, who had stood sheepishly watching her, and gave him a violent poke with the stick which she carried in her hand.

“There, Desmond, didn’t I tell you so!” she cried triumphantly. “But that’s the way always with you boys! You think no one knows anything that goes on in the country ‘cept yourselves!”

To this the other attempted no rejoinder, and the next moment both had turned away, carrying the ferrets with them in a bag, and had raced off downhill, the girl leading, the youth in tweed keeping close at her heels,

the dogs strung out on either side, or following the trail in a long string.

"Who—are those?" Gilly inquired in a tone not free from a certain accent of apprehension.

"Aw, they do be just some of the Kennedy family. Mr. Kennedy is th' agent for some of the shmall properties hereabouts."

"Hereabouts? Do you mean Inishbeg?"

"Auch, not at all! Sure, isn't Inishbeg belonging to your' own da, an' isn't it the Honourable Mr. Donellan that does be his agent? Mr. Kennedy does be only th' agent for some of the shmall little properties, as I'm after tellin' you—ould Miss Toomey's of Dooharn Lodge, an' Mr. Aloisius Kelly's, him that owns thim farms beyant Drumbanagher, an' the O'Sullivans of Garryspellane, an' the like. Nothin' big, to call rale big, 't all, 't all."

"Is fader's weally so big?" It was rather a new idea to Gilly.

Tim Moriarty turned to look at his small companion with an expression of absolute incredulity. Then, perceiving that the inquiry was a perfectly genuine one, he spat upon the ground with a gesture of contempt.

"Yarra, doesn't every living sowl know that th' airth hasn't the aqual of it?" he exclaimed indignantly. "Jist you come here an' look where I'm pointing wid me front finger, Masther Gilly! D'ye see that sort of a dark-looking ould hill, out by itself in the middle of the say? Well now that's Inishmullen, an' all on this side of the bay 'twixt it an' us does be belonging to your da. 'Deed, yis an' farther too, so it does! There's ne'er a one high or low in the county—no, nor yet out of it—that knows

rightly how far it *does* be goin', 'cept mayhap it might be the birds, galivanting about, the craturs, in th' air over it."

To this information Gilly listened with respectful attention. It did not really excite him though, as had the notion of owning Inishbeg—a place which a boy might run round any morning before breakfast, if he were quick enough. Instead, therefore, of following up this larger topic, he reverted to the previous one.

"Where are they going to now?" he asked, looking after the brother and sister, who were fast becoming speck-like in the distance.

"The dear knows! Home to their dinners most like. Mr. Kennedy's house is that crookedy lookin' one you pass on the road to Darragh Lough, the one that has such a power of whitewash on the gate-posts. Him an' Sir Maurice O'Sullivan is some sort of far-away cousins, so I understand. 'Tis a gran' houseful o' chilfer he has, whether or no, poor gentleman, an' no wife to mind them naither."

"How many has he?"

"Seven sons—not a son less—seven sons an' a daughter, the one you see over beyant—Miss Babs, as they do be callin' her. Auch, but 'tis herself is the limb! Ferretting, an' rat-hunting, an' poaching be day an' be night, an' leppin' upon wild harses, an' the devil alone knows what divarsions! The mother of them being dead this three years back, there's ne'er a one in or about to shtop her. As for her father, she pays no more heed to him, they tell me, than if he was just an ould garron aitin' thistles in the meadows yander. Biddy Moriarty, me cousin, that warks in the kitchen there, telled me mother not long

since that even her own born brothers does be often shaking wid fear of her! High an' low, upstairs an' downstairs, 'tis herself has the ruling of them all, so she has! Oh, a rale wonder, a rale out an' out wonder an' terror she is, is Miss Babs Kennedy!"

CHAPTER VIII

IN WHICH THE HERO COMES TO SOMEWHAT SERIOUS GRIEF

GILLY'S joy over these independent expeditions under Tim Moriarty's guidance was boundless, and, once permitted, it became inevitable that the experiment should be frequently repeated. Mrs. Brown wrung her hands, and prophesied every conceivable disaster, from severe colds up to vermin and bad language. Against Gilly and Mr. Moriarty combined, she was, as she well knew, powerless. She did what she could, and a letter was despatched to Lady Dunkerron, in which the appalling results of allowing Gilly to run about with only a common garden boy as companion were set forth in much detail. Furthermore, she extracted from him every time he went out a full and particular report of all that befel him. His powers of narration were, however, distinctly limited, nor was it in any case likely that Mrs. Brown would have succeeded in realising the precise measure of satisfaction, enlargement, and general emancipation which expeditions such as these afforded to a boy whose outlook had hitherto been largely restricted to the four walls of a town house, varied by walks in the London parks.

Tim Moriarty was a first-rate guide, knowing every nook and corner of his surroundings as a six-months' rabbit

knows its native burrow, or a young sea-pye the rocks on which it has been bred. Whether the knowledge so conveyed was all of a description which Mrs. Brown—or, what is more to the purpose, the boy's lady-mother—would have thought appropriate, is another matter, but at least it may be asserted that it was of a singularly innocent description, and if it did something to extend his knowledge of how other boys of nine years old lived, did little to lift the veil from any of the really uglier or squalider sides of existence.

That such expeditions were liable to bring him into contact with a certain amount of personal risk was indeed inevitable, but of what process of education worth the name might not that have been said? Under Tim's guidance he and Finn enjoyed a succession of ecstatic hunts after rabbits in and out of the wilderness of boulders which strew the upper portion of those Kilmacrenan slopes. Under pretence of fishing they visited innumerable lakes, from Darragh Lough, the nearest and the largest, up to tiny, scarce discernible "corries," gouged by the ice-gouge out of the rocky tops of the ridges. The game secured upon these occasions was inconsiderable, but for a town-bred boy the rapture of it all was beyond telling.

It was not until after some eight or nine such delectable afternoons had been spent that an incident occurred which had perforce to be brought to the knowledge of the higher powers, and which had for Gilly the effect of giving him some slight taste or sample of those more purely physical pains and penalties which for many of his contemporaries are among the most familiar and inevitable of daily experiences. It happened in this wise.

He and Tim, unaccompanied on this occasion by Finn, had started much too late one afternoon owing to a succession of heavy showers which had caused Mr. Moriarty to forbid Gilly to leave the island, and had kept him, greatly to his own disgust, close under the eyes of Mrs. Brown, and within the four walls of the cottage. At last towards five o'clock, tea being then over, the weather had suddenly cleared, and Gilly, escaping from the house like a suddenly enlarged sky-rocket, tore down to the beach to find Mr. Moriarty, and to persuade him to put them across the Sound if only for half-an-hour.

As it happened Mr. Moriarty had himself left the island shortly before to visit his son upon the mainland. The larger boat, however, was still there, and Gilly—wild with the desire of that half-hour's run upon the hillside—ordered Phelim Byrne, one of the garden men, to set him and Tim then and there across in it. To disobey the "young lard" did not enter into Phelim Byrne's ideas of the possible, and put across accordingly they were. There was only time for a short run before dark, and they therefore took the quickest way towards Darragh Lough, up the narrow boreen, out upon the heathery slope above it and so, in the course of half-an-hour, to the edge of that thin skirting of wood behind which lay Sir Maurice O'Sullivan's house, and below that again the lake.

It was beginning to turn dusk; the sun had gone down behind lead-coloured clouds, and the quickest way clearly of reaching the lake was to take a dash through this skirting of wood. Dash through it accordingly they did, but if so Tim, who was the leader, mistook the track in the dusk; darted into a mass of bracken and ivy, followed

closely by Gilly ; got into a still more inextricable tangle of brambles which lay below ; took a wild leap in order to clear it, and then—crash! crash! came both boys, one after the other into a mass of hitherto invisible glass which formed the top sashes of a row of cucumber frames, laid out there by the gardener in order to catch the morning sun upon this the sheltered side of the skirting.

It might have been as serious a matter for the boys as it certainly was for the unfortunate cucumber frames. Luckily Tim Moriarty was shod with hob-nailed boots and stout blue worsted stockings, while both of Gilly's legs were on this occasion protected by his leatheren gaiters. There were three scratched and bleeding hands, however, extracted from the *mélée*, and it was a remarkably disconsolate-looking pair of culprits who—having got themselves clear of the broken glass—stood looking, first at one another, then down at the hopelessly ruined cucumber frames.

“ ‘Tis kilt we’ll be for sartan when they gets wind of it,” Tim whispered tragically. “Come away wid you, Masther Gilly, come away for the love of God ! We’ll shlip out on to the hill wid us again !” and he began to back cautiously into the overhanging leafage.

Whether upon Gilly’s side the primitive impulse to escape or another and dimmer impression that he ought not somehow to do so would have prevailed, there was no time to know. A sound of rapidly approaching foot-steps was heard along the path beyond, coming momentarily nearer to them.

“ ‘Tis on us they are now for sartan, bad scran to

thim ! Come away wid you, Masther Gilly ; come away, I tell ye ! " Tim whispered agonisingly.

"Who is it ? Who are on us ?" Gilly whispered back, endeavouring in some bewilderment to obey.

"Lard knows ! Himself from the house maybe, or one ov them gardener boyoes ! Foller me up this crack any way. I'll aise it a thrifle for you, so foller me shmart."

Tim darted like a stoat into the mass of bramble and ivy, scrambled up a drain-like track, wet with rain, which led to the top over a projecting knoll of rock. At this point the heather began to contest matters with the grass and brambles. In another two minutes he found himself once more upon the open hillside and free of the garden precincts, the heather spreading away in all directions, and the sea lying like an interminable grey cloud at the bottom of the slope.

Gilly did his best to follow, but as compared to Tim he was a very poor proficient at the art of evasion. Hardly had he got under the first overhanging tangle of bramble and ivy, and begun to scramble up the wet track, before one of his legs was caught in an irresistible and agonisingly tight grip, and pulled backwards. As a natural consequence he fell flat upon his face upon the black miry ground, and it was in this position, scraping chin, knees, hands, and every other portion of his body against whatever lay below him, that he was finally drawn—precisely as a rabbit is drawn by its hind legs out of a hole in a wall—and tumbled helplessly in a heap before his captor at the bottom.

So appalling an experience had never befallen him in the whole course of his short acquaintanceship with

life! The mere physical discomfort was an absolute revelation to a small mortal, whose days had hitherto run on velvet, who had never so much as experienced a serious whipping in his life, and knew nothing of what may be inflicted by one human being upon another, beyond such extremely mild and conscientious inflictions as the careful Mrs. Brown might in his infant days have seen fit to bestow.

It was too dark to distinguish his captor clearly. All that Gilly was able to make out was that he was a tallish young man, with some sort of flat cap on his head, and was certainly not either Sir Maurice O'Sullivan or his own particular friend, Mr. Phil.

To draw himself up into a sitting position, and feel helplessly in his pocket for a handkerchief, which was not forthcoming, was all that Gilly was in the first instance capable of. The skies seemed to him to have fallen in, the whole world to have changed, and a new and emphatically unpleasant one to have suddenly unmasked itself. He felt sore all over from head to foot; the mere soaking of his clothes, and cut and scratched condition of his hands, forming only a part of this general sense of unmitigated and unexampled discomfort.

"Hech, you're a gran'-sized laddie to come breaking into Sir Maurice's cowcumber frames, and at sich an hour o' the nicht, too!" observed his captor in a strong Scotch accent, and in a tone of unmitigated disgust. To have succeeded single-handed in capturing an evident thief, and then to have only so small a specimen of the genus to show for your pains, was naturally trying to an ambitious young man, newly arrived in the country, and fully

determined to prove his own obvious superiority to any and all of its natives. It was like going out to fish and bringing home a mere gudgeon.

Gilly attempted neither reply nor defence, merely continued to sit there on the ground, a very limp specimen of depravity indeed, sniffing audibly, and rubbing a pair of excoriated knees, above which his knickerbockers hung in ribbons.

"Weel! come awa' with you then, whatever!" and his captor plucked him impatiently to his feet.

"Oh let me go, please let me go," moaned the culprit.

"Let you go? A likely story! Awa' with you afore me up this bit path, for 'tis to the house we'll be ganging this minute, the pair of us! Smashing into the best of the two new cowcumber frames, and he bids me let him go!"—this was an apostrophe addressed to the fir trees—"Hech Sirs, but 'tis a disrecreetable country!"

They were by this time passing through the more shaded portion of the path, and were getting to that clearer part of the grounds which lay around the house. In this fuller light young Gillespie looked down with renewed disgust at his captive, who seemed to him to be getting smaller and more unimportant-looking every instant. Had he been a mere Irish under-gardener, instead of a Scotch one, the first sound of that imploring voice would, of course, have told him that his captive was at all events no cabin-bred child. The young Aberdeenshire man's ear had not, however, been trained to such trivialities, and, if he noticed any difference, it failed to make

an impression upon him. As far as appearances went the effect upon Gilly's knickerbocker suit of that dragging process down the black hollow had effectually effaced all superficial distinctions in the matter of cut or texture.

They were close to the house now, the light from the open hall door spreading in a dull redness across the grass, and overcoming the scanty remnants of daylight. Gilly's state of dilapidation had by this time attained to its lowest conceivable level. His shoes were full of earth; his head ached; his knees were so sore that he could scarcely bend them. He hobbled disconsolately along at his captor's side, an utterly limp little morsel of humanity, only kept from actually collapsing by the firm grip retained upon one of his arms.

It was not to the back door, as usual, but to the front one that young Gillespie advanced, and rang the bell there with all the pride of conscious achievement. A man who has just succeeded in catching a thief and trespasser—even if it be but a small one—naturally does not go round to back doors.

The ring was answered by Mr. Doherty in person. Gilly, who the moment they stopped had collapsed and sunk forlornly down upon a step, could hear the conversation that took place between the two men.

“A braw nicht to you, Mr. Doherty!”—this was uttered in a tone of irresistible triumph. “Maybe you'll kindly let Sir Maurice be acquainted with the fact that I've caught this young scaramouch in the very act of breaking into one o' his new cowcumber frames. There was a pair o' them, and the t'other was the biggerer-looking chap of the two, but I failed unfortunately to get my hand

on him, though I've no doubt I shall do so still, and so you may tell Sir Maurice. There's been a power o' sich depredations, I understand, this time back, but I've not heard of anybody being caught over them before! Nae doot they that are belonging to the same neebor-hood are wae to be telling the one upon the other. May I trouble you, Mr. Doherty—being, as I understand, a native of these parts yourself—to kindly cast an eye on the sma' raskill, and see if by chance you recognise him. Up with you, you little limb o' Satan, and show the ugly bit face of you to the gentleman!"

That Sir Maurice O'Sullivan's butler was without prejudices in favour of this extremely self-satisfied young Scotchman will be realised to be an understatement of the fact. If he held himself somewhat aloof from the common herd, as became his position, he at least fully shared in their dislike to the introduction of interlopers, especially Scotch ones.

Unfortunately on this occasion there appeared to be nothing to do except to give Sir Maurice the new under-gardener's report, and Mr. Doherty therefore turned away from the door in silent dignity to do so.

But Gilly, who perfectly remembered the stout man who had brought out tea upon a previous memorable occasion, at this juncture lifted up a miserable little face, down which uncontrollable tears had worn two long streaks, and cried in the lamentable tones of one who sees his last hope about to disappear :

"Oh, if you please, if you *please*, won't you ask Mr. Phil to come and tell him to let me go?"

At the sound of that abject voice Mr. Doherty turned

and gave a violent start. Then a gleam of intense satisfaction shot across his broad, decorous face.

"Be the powers, you're an extraordinarily clever young man, 'pon me life an' sowl y're, Mr. Thomas Gillespie," he said, in a tone of withering sarcasm, "the devil's own clever young man—a ganius no less—at knowing a young gentleman from a thief when you come across one!" Then, before the indignant under-gardener could utter a word in his own defence, and with an entire change of voice and manner, "Will your lardship be so good as to come within doors an' speak yourself to Sir Maurice? Shocked it is and 'shamed he'll be, so he will, to think that e'er a one on *this* property would be afther mis-handling your lardship in such a manner! 'Tisn't a thing could ever have happened, only there's some come about it now that ignorant that they don't know a young gentleman—not to speak of a young nobleman—when they set their two eyes on him."

To describe the stupefaction of the unfortunate under-gardener as he listened to this address is beyond all ordinary powers of narration. A passing hope that Mr. Doherty might be drunk, or have gone suddenly mad, sustained him for an instant. This last hope, however, vanished as Gilly, with the cry of a child who has at last found help, scrambled up the two top steps, and literally hurled himself—rags, dirt, tears, and all—into the stout butler's arms.

"Oh take me away! *please* take me to Mr. Phil," he wailed.

"I will, sor; I will in coarse, me lard. 'Tis in the billiard-room I believe the gentlemen are, the two of

them, at the present time. Will your lardship be pleased to follow me."

Swelling with importance he led the way, Gilly pattering feebly after. The billiard-room lay across the hall at the end of a short passage. Never in his whole dignified career had Mr. Doherty so enjoyed himself probably as at that moment. The door reached, he flung it open to its widest possible extent, and it was in the stentorian tones of a butler ushering in guests upon the top of a London staircase that he announced :

“The Earl of Shannagh !”

How he got into that room Gilly never could afterwards remember. His own impression was that he must have collapsed then and there upon the carpet, and fallen asleep ! At any rate when he next realised where he was, or what had happened, he found himself lying tucked up on a leather sofa ; his wet shoes and stockings had been taken off, a large rug wrapped round him, and something very hot and strong was being presented to his lips. He drank it, opened his mouth to say “Thank you,” and—to his own infinite mortification—once more began helplessly to sniff.

“Poor little chap ! Poor dear little chap ! I say, Maurice, what the dickens does it all mean, and who on earth can have got him into such an ungodly pickle ?” he heard his friend Mr. Phil say in tones of angry astonishment. Next there came a sound as of banging doors, and Sir Maurice O’Sullivan’s voice very loud and distinct at the front door. Then that door, too, was noisily banged; and there were sounds of retreating footsteps, remarkably hasty footsteps, which Gilly somehow surmised to be those



“Never had Mr. Doherty so enjoyed himself.”

of his late tyrant, the young man in the flat cap. By this time the effects of the hot stuff which he had drunk had begun to grow overpowering. Everything seemed to him to be getting mixed and confused; the room itself to be swinging slowly up and down; the turf fire to be sometimes quite low down upon the ground, and the next moment hanging somewhere near the ceiling. Then these phenomena also ceased, and he found himself sinking, sinking, down into some very warm and very comfortable place. The unprecedented experiences of the last hour melted entirely away, and almost before Sir Maurice had returned to the billiard-room his uninvited guest had attained to a condition of repose from which no amount of banging doors or angry voices could, for the present at least, have availed to rouse him.

CHAPTER IX

SHOWS HOW THE HERO TROD THE PATH OF PROMOTION

MEANWHILE Tim Moriarty, I desire to explain, had by no means shown so craven a spirit as may at first sight appear. He was not in the least a cowardly boy, although his courage—by force possibly of example, possibly of inheritance—was more apt to be at its ease amongst shadows than in the open. He had not the faintest intention of deserting Master Gilly; would not, in fact, have dared to present himself before his grandfather had he done so. It did not seem to him, however, on realising that Gilly had been captured, that it would do the least good were he to return and share his fate. On the contrary, that the “young lard” was more likely to escape serious punishment than himself, Tim Moriarty, was a proposition too self-evident to need demonstration.

He waited, therefore, until his own immediate neighbourhood had again become quiet, and Gilly and his captor had disappeared in the direction of the house. Then he slipped noiselessly down the black track, and proceeded to follow them in the same direction, keeping away from the open spaces, and skulking in and out of the thick fringe of laurels which grew in front of the pine trees. In this fashion he crept cautiously on until he had got as near as he dared to

the front door. By the time he had reached it the altercation between butler and gardener had come to an end, and Gilly had disappeared into the house. He was in time, however, to see Sir Maurice O'Sullivan come striding out of it like a whirlwind ; fall upon some one standing there, and then and there give him "the illegantist ould tongue-thrashing a body would wish to hear in a month," then march back into the house again, slamming the door behind him.

What it all precisely meant Tim had no means of knowing, but his sound mother-wits enabled him to form a shrewd guess at least as to the general drift of events. How Master Gilly was going to get home that evening was the question to his mind of chief importance. It was impossible to go up to the hall door and inquire, equally impossible to go away until this point was cleared up. Accordingly he crept round the house and got cautiously through the laurels to the back door. It was wide open, and he squatted against the wall as close to it as he dared, and waited. A divine smell of cooking floated through it to his nostrils, and Tim suddenly realised that it was a bitter while since dinner, and that he himself was getting "mortal hungry." It was not safe, however, he reflected, to remain where he was, seeing that if any one came out of the kitchen door and stepped beyond the threshold that person would assuredly see him. He slipped accordingly back into the laurels, and having again made the circuit of the house, waited, first on one side of it, and then on the other, watching the windows, and lingering on the chance of something happening.

It was a long weary wait, for Gilly, as we know, had

fallen asleep upon the billiard-room sofa. At last Tim's patience was rewarded. A window above his head, at some distance to the left, became brightly illuminated. Another and another followed, and two figures, a very small and a very large one, came into sight, passing from one illuminated window to another. Then a nearer window, evidently that of a bedroom, was lit up, and, the curtains not having been drawn, he could see how the light shot suddenly over its pink walls, and got caught in a monstrously big looking-glass set in one of the presses. The two figures he was unable to see from where he stood, but from the glimpses he had had of them as they came along the passage, as well as from the sound of voices which reached him through the open window, he made up his mind that they were those of Gilly himself and Sir Maurice.

A minute later the bedroom door again opened and shut, and the tall figure came along the passage. The light had by this time been fully turned on, and as the figure passed close to a window Tim could see that it unmistakably was Sir Maurice O'Sullivan.

Master Gilly was then alone! How to communicate with him was obviously the question. A big pine-tree against whose trunk he had been leaning supplied the answer. It had branches reaching nearly to the ground, so that there was no difficulty in clambering up it. By the time Tim had done so, and had reached the level of the window, the bedroom in front was nearly as visible to him as though he had been inside it. There sure enough was Master Gilly sitting, as a lord should, in a grand arm-chair, with his feet thrust out in front of him, and a pair of man's slippers upon them!

Before there was time, however, to try and attract his attention, the door opened again, and this time a woman came in, a stout elderly personage, with an elaborately wrinkled face, and large white cap, whom he had heard spoken of in the village as Mrs. Hearne.

She promptly proceeded to take off Master Gilly's own clothes, and to dress him up in a gorgeous blue silk suit, coat, waistcoat, and trousers, which she had brought with her—a smoking suit of Phil Acton's. It was yards too long for him, and Tim could hear the woman laughing, as she busied herself in rolling up the bottoms of the trousers, and pinning the coat here and there, in order to try and make it fit. Presently she ran short of pins, and he saw her go off, leaving Master Gilly with one long blue trouser-leg rolled up nearly to his knees, and the other trailing behind him like a lady's skirt over the floor. Now or never, thought Tim, and, hooking both feet securely on to a level branch so as to free his hands, he put them one before the other in front of his mouth, and began hooting softly through them like an owl.

Gilly looked up. It was impossible to see anything farther than the window, the room being so light and the outside world so dark. He had heard Tim hoot like an owl before, so, suspecting it to be a signal, he made his way over to the window, clutching up the folds of the blue smoking suit in his hands as he did so.

"Is that you out there, Tim?" he whispered, peering into the darkness.

"'Tis, me lard. Sure, can't you see me sittin' up in the fork of this ould tree?" came back in muffled tones from the middle of the pine branches.

"No, I can't; I can't see anything. Did they catch you too?"

"Sorra fear of them!" Tim's scorn had to be kept low by the necessity of caution. "Bedad, if your lardship would have but legged it the way I bad you, that ugly Scotch devil would never have laid his finger upon you."

"I did, but I couldn't get up quick enough, and he caught hold of me by the leg!" Gilly's voice was again rather lachrymose as he recalled all the agonies and ignominies of that moment.

"Did Himself say aught to you about the shmaskin' of the glasses?" Tim hissed next.

"The man who——?"

"Och, not at all! The dory spalpeen! *Himself*, Sir Maurice O'Sullivan, I mane, in coarse."

"Oh no, he didn't say nothing. He was vewy kind. He says I'm to sleep here to-night, and he has sent to Mrs. Bown to tell her so."

At this intelligence Tim emitted a doleful whistle.

"Glory to goodness, an' what's to become of *me* then, I'd loike to know?" he groaned. "Sure, I'd no more face me grandada an' your lardship not in it than I'd face ould O'Shaughnessey's young bull, an' it loose."

"Why? What would he do to you? He wouldn't beat you, would he?" To associate Mr. Moriarty with physical violence was really exciting!

"Bedad, 'tis some'at a dale worse nor bating he'd do to me, so he would!" Tim said sulkily. "Any way, I'll not risk it. 'Tis home I'll shlip to me mother, an' thin——. Whist, she's comin'!"

The door opened, and the woman with the cap returned, bringing the pins; also brushes, combs, sponges, and everything else necessary for an elaborate toilet. At the same moment, Tim slid noiselessly down the big pine trunk, and vanished like a ghost into the darkness.

The evening thus inaugurated proved to be an epoch-making one for Gilly, only impaired by the sleepiness which still hung over him like a cloud, descending without the least warning even while he was actually sitting in state at dinner between Sir Maurice and Mr. Phil, and being waited upon by Mr. Doherty and a couple of subordinates. Soup and fish; creamy things that tasted of eggs; hot meats; followed by more creamy things that tasted of various sugary delectabilities, Gilly manfully attacked them all. Nothing could, however, effectually keep away those overpowering attacks of sleepiness, and about nine o'clock he was marched off to bed under the charge of Mr. Doherty. The woman with the cap once more appeared upon the scene. And although he endeavoured to explain to her that he could weally do everything for himself—he weally, weally could—he was too sleepy to insist, and speedily found himself undressed and tucked up into the big bed. The curtains were drawn, a night-light got seated upon its saucer of water in a corner of the room, and the rest of the night was for Gilly one long nap, unchequered by even a solitary dream.

CHAPTER X

DEALS WITH A HALCYON INTERVAL

THE next morning he and Sir Maurice breakfasted together *tête-à-tête* in quite a different room from the one they had dined in ; a smaller one, hung over with swords, and spears, and knives, and guns, and other weapons of every sort and description. Some of these were after breakfast taken down by Sir Maurice for his benefit. There were several extraordinary looking guns, with enormously long stocks, inlaid with red and green decorations, the most beautiful guns Gilly thought that he had ever seen in his life. Also assegais from Zululand ; swords and scimitars, crisses, and daggers, some of the latter with immense green jade handles, while others were silver-worked over the hilt, with writing upon them in silver, writing which Gilly found himself quite unable to read. Sir Maurice pulled one of these out of its sheath, and showed him a mark upon the blade which proved that it had once upon a time been an English bayonet, although it came, he told him, from the farthest far-off corner of Morocco, close up to the Great Desert, where Englishmen or white men of any sort were hardly ever to be seen.

Next Gilly paid a visit upstairs to Mr. Phil, and sat in a bow-window, and rocked himself in a big cane rocking-chair, while he looked at the lake below, and listened to wonderful stories which Mr. Phil related to

him. One of these stories was about another lake, something like this one, into which a sword had been thrown, for no earthly reason, so far as Gilly could understand, and all that had happened after the throwing of that sword. Another story was about some people called "Bare Sarks," who seemed to have had the habit of rowing themselves down in summer time from the Far-away-North, and of landing here and there in Ireland and Scotland and Wales, and other places, and of enjoying themselves greatly when they got there, although, so far as Gilly understood the story, the people whom they visited did not by any means enjoy their visits equally.

The final and crowning delight of these doings was to have been a sail home to Inishbeg with Sir Maurice in his hooker. Unfortunately this last bliss was foiled, for just as they were about to set out for the landing-place, there came a jingling of wheels to the hall door, and Mrs. Brown appeared in "Mr. Whelan's Inside," all bugles, tears, and breathless remonstrances. There was no help for it, and he was obliged to submit to drive back with her, and to be alternately scolded and kissed all the way home. Mr. Phil had promised that he would come soon again to Inishbeg, and tell him some more stories ; Sir Maurice also had promised that he should have a sail in the hooker another afternoon instead ; and on the strength of these two promises he was forced to content himself.

What took place between Tim and his grandfather Gilly never was able to ascertain. All that is certain is that Tim did not reappear at Inishbeg till some days later, and that after that date nothing further was said to

either of the boys about their late misdoings. The only difference it seemed to make was that the next time they went for a run over the Kilmacrenan hillside Mr. Moriarty went too, and he and Tim rowed the boat between them for some distance down the coast. Here the old man waited, while the two boys and Finn scrambled up to the top of the first hill to the famous Rocking-Stone near the summit of it, a stone which could be made to waggle and rock to and fro on its pedestal by the mere weight of a boy standing upon top of it, although it was a good bit bigger than any two of the cottages about. Then they rowed home again, and, the sea being unusually smooth, Mr. Moriarty let Gilly take an oar himself, with the result that after violent exertions he caught a magnificent crab, and fell heels over head into the bottom of the boat, to be picked up and smoothed down compassionately by Mr. Moriarty, and to find Tim's freckled face expanded from ear to ear with a grin of intense satisfaction over the mishap.

After this matters went on much as usual for some time, varied only by the visits of Mr. Phil, who would arrive unexpectedly, sometimes for half-an-hour, sometimes for an entire afternoon. These he would spend, either rolled up in his boat rugs in a warm sandy hollow, specially scraped for him by Gilly, or else if the weather proved too bad for this, in one of the big arm-chairs close to the book-room window.

At first Mrs. Brown showed a disposition to resent these visits, and Gilly found that he was kept away from the book-room upon one pretext or another. About this time there arrived, however, a letter from India, in

which Lady Dunkerron said that she quite agreed with all that Mrs. Brown had told her, and that it was all dreadfully wrong and shocking, and *quite* impossible, but that she must just do the best she could for the present, and that a tutor would be arriving very shortly, who would take Gilly entirely into his own hands.

Now it so happened that the arrival of a tutor was about the very last thing in the world that Mrs. Brown's heart was panting for ! The consequence was that no further complaints were despatched to India, and that Gilly found to his surprise that he was allowed to run about the island as he chose, and to be as much with Mr. Phil as he liked. Mrs. Brown even extended her amiability so far as actually on more than one occasion to carry in a cup of tea with her own hands from the nursery tea-table to the book-room, and to place it, in company with a plate of thick bread and butter, upon a small table close to Mr. Phil's chair in the window.

It was a good, a really good and satisfactory time for Gilly. If there was nothing very riotous about the form of his entertainment, at least it was a great deal better than anything that he had known before. He had won his small victory, and within certain limits had secured his freedom, and that alone meant much to him. Certainly, to sit by oneself in a garden, and to watch other people dig it, cannot be called an intoxicating form of entertainment, and it was in this fashion that his mornings were still chiefly spent. The art, or possibly science, of self-amusement was one of which he had as yet acquired only the rudiments. He had a few story-books, but reading did not at present mean much to him, and to the

delights of combined out-of-doors reading and dreaming he had up to now barely been introduced. Mr. Phil had tried to indoctrinate him into that most entrancing of all pastimes, but so far the variety which appealed most to Gilly was to sit upon his heels, in the fashion Tim Moriarty had taught him, and with eyes fixed now upon his companion's face, now upon the sea, to listen to a variety of accounts with regard to the doings of a variety of persons, called by various odd names, and behaving for the most part in fashions that would certainly never have been permitted for a moment in Brook Street, nor would, he felt privately convinced, have at all commended them to the good opinion of Mrs. Brown !

He and Mr. Phil had by this time become the fastest of friends, and it would be hard to say which of the two derived most satisfaction from that friendship. It was a quaint sort of an alliance certainly, between a decidedly promising young scholar of twenty-four and a rather childish little boy of nine ! Like most other friendships it had come about naturally enough from the circumstances that gave it birth. Given enforced idleness upon one side, open-mouthed admiration upon the other, a total lack of other suitable companionship upon both, and the result is not really so very surprising. There were, moreover, other attractions for Phil on Inishbeg, besides Gilly's company and his small-boy admiration, and these helped to draw him towards it day after day.

To a born beauty-lover the concentrated loveliness of the little spot itself—so consummate in its own tiny fashion—would alone have been sufficient magnet. Then here was the book-room, which in the literary famine

of his present existence had seemed to come to him like a gift from the gods, a personal possession—one which was combined with an odd feeling of acquaintanceship with its dead and vanished owner. Under other circumstances the books themselves would in all probability have been passed over by him as a mere heterogeneous gathering ; a scratch lot, eminently characteristic of a woman's thin veneer of scholarship and her capricious eclecticism. Here at Inishbeg, played across by the gleams, making golden-green patterns over them from the waves below, they suited their environment, and their environment most unquestionably suited them.

To settle down into one of those well-worn arm-chairs, within reach of one of those low book-shelves, was fast coming to be to Phil Acton a sort of necessity, one which stood him in stead of a good many other so-called necessities which had of late grown to be unattainable. With a finger drawn exploringly along their faded backs, he would take down first one book, then another ; read it for awhile ; then look up ; become absorbed perhaps in the doings of the gulls and kittiwakes bobbing, tame as so many farm-yard ducks, at the bottom of the little coose. Then—recollecting himself—he would hastily pick up his book again, with a sense of relish which was not perhaps entirely due to its contents.

Who that loves books—profoundly, or even superficially—does not know how that love glows and wanes according to the environment ? You read such and such a book to-day, in such and such a place—amongst the bracken perhaps, or at the stream-side, while the trout delay to rise—it lives, it breathes, it almost speaks ; it looks up in

your face, and laughs audibly ! You read it again to-morrow or next day, at Tooting say, or Bayswater, or at your club. Alas, for the inspired volume ! Dish-water is sparkling by comparison !

So it was that summer with Phil Acton. Had he been asked he would probably have answered in all good faith that he believed he was as well up in the ordinary run of French and English books as most fellows. Between such mere bowing acquaintanceship as this and real assimilation a gulf yawns vast and deep, and so he was beginning for the first time to discover. A natural scruple kept him from ever taking any of the Inishbeg books away with him, all the more because there was no one, properly speaking, of whom to ask leave. That being the case, if he wanted them, he had to go to them, and seldom have book-room and book-reader found themselves more intimately in accord the one with the other !

By Sir Maurice's orders Tom Devitt and a boat waited every day for Mr. Acton at the Darragh landing-place, and few days passed upon which that young gentleman was not to be seen coming slowly down the path, and clambering cautiously aboard. Once seated, and his hands on the tiller ropes, they would start blithely away for the island ; the bay opening and dimpling ahead, Phil himself feeling for the moment in a mood of hope and energy to meet such freshness exultantly.

It seems almost worth while—and yet No ! that certainly is too large a saying—for a young man to be toppled down awhile from the pedestal of his youth and strength, in order that he may come to learn what those joys are—familiar enough to some of his elders—which visit the sou

when the new and disastrous condition of affairs for awhile relents, and the old delights, the old belief in one's own omniscience, comes racing like a conqueror over the ruins! Such joys—shortlived, but delicious—Phil Acton tasted to the full on these long June afternoons. When the wind happened to be in the east, Tom Devitt would take to his oars, and the transit was then necessarily slower. Usually it was the return journey that was thus delayed, the outward one being sped by a wind which carried them with a single tack right into the little Inishbeg harbour. The sail made an astonishing splash of whiteness against the dull bluish-grey tints of the hills; the small channel waves would leap and scatter against the bows, rushing away towards the shore, or shooting up in silvery dust against some outlying rock or skerry. Then, as they began to draw near it, the little island itself would be seen glittering ahead like a bit of pure gold in its girdle of gorse. Past the point of it they would race, where Gilly and Finn were usually to be discovered capering expectantly. Next through the narrow Sound, and in another ten minutes they would be heading straight for the pier, by which time the boy and dog would also have reached it, and would be seen standing there side by side, watching and waiting to see them come to shore.

CHAPTER XI

RELATES TO CERTAIN MIDNIGHT TERRORS

“ Flossy Flossy Florum,
Sitting on the brink,
Tell me, Flossy Florum,
What you really think ?

Are your fancies diving
'Neath this sunlit sea ?
Or are you surmising
What there'll be for tea ?

Do they subtly wander
Mid yon realms of blue ?
Or maturely ponder
Hats and sashes new ?

Muse you, as love flatters,
Deep themes, learnt on high ?
Or on nearer matters—
Sweets and cherry pie ?

Flossy Flossy Florum,
Sitting on the brink,
Kindly tell me, Flossy,
What you *really* think ?”

—*Songs of Silliness.*

FAMILIES are odd institutions, and the difference between the various human nestlings which compose them seems to be a good deal wider than between those feathery ones whom we meet with in wood or garden, though that impression may be a proof merely of our proper ignorance.

Where the family consists of only two, one of whom is a boy, the other a girl, the difference is likely to be

all the wider. As regards this particular Gilly and Jan there was in addition a gulf of years, a gulf so yawning that no differences attainable in later years can approach it. Four whole years! The boy nine, the girl five! Is there any depth of social disparity—between drummer-boy, say, and colonel; between latest-arrived fag and oldest sixth-form magnate—that will in the least adequately convey it?

An eminently secretive little soul was Jan, showing none of Gilly's wild exuberance, either in the form of outbursts of turbulent delight or of equally turbulent rage. In reality, a whole fund of private ideas and inventiveness slumbered within her, but little or no hint of these had so far ever been vouchsafed to any one. Even her likings and dislikings were hidden away in the same secretive fashion, and how far she really did or did not care even for Gilly himself was a mystery, and certainly would have been one to him, had he ever deigned to trouble his head about so unimportant a detail.

Compassed about as she was with a whole host of nursery ordinances, it would have seemed to the casual eye as if Jan's scope for independent action must be practically non-existent. In reality, this was not so. Not only had she a remarkably clear set of likes and dislikes, but even of habits and vagaries, as regards which Mrs. Brown and Hemma knew about as much as they knew of the habits and vagaries of the hermit-crabs under the stones, or of the kittiwakes bobbing up and down upon the dimples of the Sound. Just about as much and no more.

One trait, not exactly an enviable one, she and Gilly did possess in common. Both were liable to attacks of recur-

rent, and often, even to themselves, quite unaccountable panic. In Gilly's case advancing years were enabling him to get the better of this, while in Jan's it was carefully hidden away under a double and treble cloak of baby secretiveness. A phase of it from which she suffered Gilly had either escaped, or had by this time happily forgotten. Particular places and objects had a power of inspiring her with qualms of unspeakable horror and alarm. Here at Inishbeg, for instance, there happened to be a little oozy hollow, which had to be passed every day on the way to the rose-garden ; a small brownish recess, in which a host of tiny filmy ferns sprouted out of a peaty bank, and down the sides of which fell a continual "drip drip" of black drops one after the other, drop following drop to the bottom of the hollow, where they became lost to sight.

Nothing obviously could be more innocent, but for Jan something—she could not in the least have told what—cold, and clammy, and utterly cruel and horrible, seemed to be lurking for all who were unlucky enough to have to pass by that way. Even the impassive Hemma became aware that there was always one moment in their morning's walk when Lady Janetta's small hand began to clutch vehemently, as it seemed to her highly affectionately, at her petticoats—clinging tightly to them with all the strength of her fingers—although, so soon as the next turn of the walk had been reached, the fingers would gradually relax, and Lady Janetta would again trot on ahead with that five-years-old dignity of hers, which was not entirely due either to the feathers on her hat or to the elaborateness of her little white-frilled skirts.

To a great fellow of nine like Gilly such aberrations

would have seemed merely contemptible, and this Jan knew far too well to give him the slightest hint upon the subject. And yet this magnificent Gilly was himself liable to attacks of terror, not at bottom much more reasonable. Generally it was beside the sea, and, to do him justice, after sitting there rather too long by himself, that this particular ignominy overtook him. There was one spot near the end of the island where he and Finn spent many mornings, lying out upon the tufts of sea-thrift, and watching the fronds of laminaria as they swept to and fro, like enormously long brown arms, just outside the limits of lowest tide-mark. Suddenly, while lying there, watching the sea-weeds and thinking of nothing in particular, panic — a panic like a wild beast — would leap upon Gilly. What it was, whence it came, what it meant, he could never tell. Something seemed to whisper in his ear that this water he was looking at would never cease from coming up ; that it must *always* go on rising ; that it could never now be stopped ; that it would come up and up till it had flowed over everything — over himself ; over the men yonder digging cabbages in the garden ; over Mrs. Brown, Hemma, and Jan in the cottage ; over the whole of Inishbeg, of Ireland, of the entire big populated world. For a moment the impression would be so strong that it was like something that had actually occurred ; he seemed to feel himself struggling in that smothering world of water ; to be rolled to and fro in it like the sea-weeds ; to be going down, down with crowds upon crowds of other people into some unnameable depth of darkness and suffocation. Then, like a flash, the impression would pass off. Another two or three minutes and it had completely

rolled away, as a thunder-cloud rolls from off the sky, and he could see the rocks, and the shore dappled over with sunlight, and could again distinguish the voices of the cuckoos, calling cheerfully to one another, as they sailed round the yews and juniper bushes near the landing-place.

There came an evening—it was the last but one in that month of June—when, for the first time in their lives, this trait of theirs became revealed to both children simultaneously. It had, as a result, the drawing of them nearer to one another than they had ever been drawn in their short lives before.

The afternoon had been unusually warm, and the evening which followed was one of those odd ones of alternate calm and sudden gusts of hot wind, which occur pretty often in summer time in the south of Ireland. That this particular evening really bore some stamp of oddity was undeniable, seeing that even the sagacious Finn perceived something to be amiss, and kept going over to the door ; uttering a series of short sharp barks as a dog does when he hears unauthorised footsteps ; then returning and lying down ; only to get up and go back to the door a few minutes later and repeat the performance.

Gilly had been persuaded to go to bed, but to remain there quietly and to go to sleep seemed to him for some reason a perfect absurdity. The maids had retired to discuss cold beef and pickled onions as a natural preparation for their own slumbers. Accordingly he stole out of bed again noiselessly upon bare feet, and having pushed aside the curtains, settled himself in a squatting attitude upon the window-seat.

The sun had gone to its own bed amid washes of dusky

orange, which in their turn had now died away, leaving the western sky of a dull greyish-violet tint. Against this dusky sky the channels showed nearly pure white, the hills, too, wore that oddly topsy-turvy aspect which a heavy thunderstorm sometimes brings. Like the book-room window, this one also looked into the cistus-filled creek, and beyond it Gilly could see the oak-crowned knoll which rose in the middle of the island. The wind had fallen, and not a sound was to be heard except a sleepy, scraping, rasping noise made by the water against the stones at the bottom of the creek.

For a moment he fancied that he could see the sea-weed shining with dots and sparkles of phosphorescence, such as he had been shown one evening in the harbour by Mr. Moriarty. It set him thinking of something that Tim had talked about one afternoon when they were lying upon the Devenish rocks together. There were certain creatures—"Things," Tim had informed him mysteriously—that were hardly ever seen by any one, yet were well known for all that to be living in many of the caves, such as those that ran under Inishbeg itself, and could only be reached in a boat. "Thim Ould Wans," Tim had called them, and had lowered his voice impressively as he did so. What were they, those "old ones," Gilly now suddenly wondered, sitting there in his nightshirt upon the window-seat? Were they some sort of men, or were they only some sort of animals, and if they were animals, what did they look like? A vision of something at once enormously large and enormously soft—horribly and disgustingly soft, like a gigantic sea-anemone—rose up for a moment before his mind. Unlike a sea-anemone

this thing seemed to be covered over with eyes, large round ones like those on the wings of a peacock butterfly, only of a dull blackish brown, eyes which winked slowly over the whole surface of its wet and flabby body. It was only a momentary impression, but it was a chilly and a quite sufficiently unpleasant one. Gilly's toes, too, were getting, he discovered, undesirably chilly, and between the two shiverings, one inside and the other out, he began to think with less contempt of his neglected bed.

He crept back to it accordingly over the floor, and, having arrived at the side of it, hopped in, with that sudden sensation of having just escaped from a crowd of pinching creatures, all eager to get the first nip, but happily foiled by the bedclothes, which is familiar to most bed-goers under nine, and to a good many who have travelled some distance beyond that elementary milestone.

Shelter attained, though he still felt a trifle goose-skinned, especially in the region of the backbone, the comfort and blessed security of the bedclothes was so great that after rolling about a bit, first on one side and then on the other, he presently fell asleep.

He was awakened by an odd, and a particularly unpleasant sensation. Something, or some one, seemed to be feeling cautiously for him all over the bed! When he first awoke it was his feet that were being thus felt for, and, as soon as found, plucked and pulled at, not violently, on the contrary quite gently, with little soft dragging pulls, as if the creature, whatever it was, was trying to ascertain exactly whereabouts he lay. Then the pulls and pats began to travel upwards over his body,

higher and higher still, past his thighs towards his chest, so that in a very short time, he realised, they would have reached and be touching his face!

What made the sensation all the worse was that it was done without the slightest noise, or only the very faintest ruffling sounds where the bedclothes above him were being softly stirred.

Those momentary sensations of alarm which had seized upon Gilly while sitting upon the window-seat were as nothing compared to the chill of mortal terror which crept over him while this patting and pulling process was going on. For the first time in his life he ascertained by experience what it is to grow positively stiff with fright. If his hair did not begin to stand on end it is possible that may have been due rather to the pomatum liberally bestowed upon it by Mrs. Brown than to any more natural cause.

At first his eyes remained resolutely shut, the lids seeming to have glued themselves together. Gradually they opened—as it seemed of their own accord—and the bit of wall exactly opposite his bed came into sight. A moon had by this time risen, so that this bit of wall showed a dusky shimmer where the light stole towards it through the curtains. Nothing else could Gilly see from where he lay, and as for turning his head or even his eyes by so much as the hundredth part of an inch one way or other, of that, I need hardly say, he was absolutely incapable.

Suddenly the pulling and patting process ceased, and in the silence there broke out what sounded like a thin and ghostly sob. It was followed by a faint catching

sound, as if something or some one were sobbing softly in the dark, and were trying to stifle the sound. Terror still held Gilly fast, so that he felt incapable of any movement. The first sickening weight of fear was beginning, however, to relax. He did not recognise anything familiar about the sound of that sob, for his mind had not yet reached the point from which he could recognise everyday sights and sounds. That earlier clutch of benumbing terror was loosening, however, and his senses were beginning to rise up again as out of an eclipse.

“Where is oo’? Oh, where *is* oo’?” It was like the moan of some little lost spirit appealing in the extremity of its desolation. Then—“Gilly-boy! Where *is* oo’, Gilly-boy?”

With a leap, like that of some defeated monster, the whole weight of Terror suddenly fell off from Gilly, and disappeared into the night! He was himself again; he was wide awake; he was not in any beastly horrible sort of a nightmare—worse, in some indescribable state between sleeping and waking. He was in his own bed, in his own room at Inishbeg, and this moaning, ghostly object, which he could just see shivering whitely beside him in the dusk, was nothing more fear-inspiring than his own silly little sister Jan!

Some revulsion of self-disgust was bound to follow this discovery; but at first he was far too relieved to think of anything else. He sprang into a sitting position in his bed, and, leaning over, felt in the direction of the ghost, which thereupon flung itself bodily into his arms, rubbing its head against him as a scared kitten might do.

"Gilly-boy! Gilly-boy! Oh, Gilly-boy!" It was a scarcely audible moan of terror, suppressed evidently until suppression had become past all bearing.

"Why you little— Why Jan, you poor miserable little wretch! Whatever is the matter? What brings you in here out of your bed at this hour of the night?"

"I cudn't, I cudn't— Gilly-boy. Oh, Gilly-boy! *It! It!*" and the fingers tightened themselves with a still more tenacious clutch around his arm.

"Well, you've got me! I'm all right! You can hold on to me as tight as you want. *I* don't mind. There's nothing on earth to be afraid of *here!*" Gilly's tone was quite pharasaic in its self-confidence.

"Oo! oo! oo!" Evidently those reiterated moans could not immediately be stopped, and there was a sense of acute terror about them which had an infectious quality. It partially reawakened some of Gilly's own fears, and this naturally made him cross.

"Look here, Jan, you shut up! There ain't nothing here, I tell you, to be afraid of. Haven't I 'splained that to you already? Very well then! what is it? Oh, all right." For one of Jan's hands had here gone up to his mouth, and the forefinger of the other one was pointing towards the larger room, through the door of which sounds, sonorous sounds, a symphony of duplicated snores, were clearly to be heard.

To such a suggestion Gilly readily responded. He was in full accord with Jan in her evident desire not to bring the nursery authorities upon their heads! It was bad enough, he said to himself, being clutched and clawed

about by her, without being pounced upon and bovered by Mrs. Brown.

He listened for a moment with some apprehension, but the snores went on uninterruptedly. The only person who had been aroused by his voice was Finn, who had thereupon promptly leaped down from his own cot, and — as the thing most obviously necessary — had begun energetically to lick the two little naked feet which he found standing out unprotectedly upon the matting.

This put Gilly upon his mettle as to his own brotherly duties, and he in his turn sprang hastily up.

"Here, get in with you there. Hop in, I say, Jan, out of the cold, you poor little shivering wretch."

He half-pushed, half-lifted her into the warm nest thus left vacant. The effect was instantaneous. The long-drawn moans sank into little wandering sighs. Jan's head fell back, and she began to doze, still clinging tightly on to him.

What was he to do with her? Gilly asked himself. Obviously there was no room for both of them in one cot, and Finn's cot had no sheets on it, only a blanket folded back at the foot. Loosing Jan's hand he scrambled provisionally into this, and dragged the blanket up towards his chin. He also felt sleepy, desperately sleepy, and as far as comfort went could perfectly well have slept where he was. On the other hand, if he did so the result, he realised, would be that the whole position of affairs would be revealed the moment the pair in the next room chanced to awake. Could he manage to get Jan back into her own bed? Evidently that was the thing to do, as she would then be found safe and sound in the

morning, and there would be no questions asked, and *no boverations*.

She was so fast asleep that it seemed a shame to wake her up again. Could he carry her, he wondered. He felt rather doubtful upon the subject ; still it seemed worth trying.

He got his arm round her, and did his best to lift her up, but the little yielding body slipped away by force of its own inertia from his grasp. The effort to do so half-woke Jan, and she opened her great sleepy eyes, and thereupon promptly clutched at him in renewed alarm. For a moment the two little nightgown-clad figures clung closely to one another. Then with a sense of what was due to his own manly dignity, Gilly disengaged himself, and once more squatted down upon Finn's cot.

The curtains of the windows were blowing about, and between them the moon stole in ; one long tortuous ray streaming right across the two cots set side by side. It lit up Jan's eyes, open now, and filled with a shadow of indefinable terror. Those few moments of unconsciousness had, however, done a good deal to break the spell of all but insane fear which had at first possessed her, and when Gilly returned to the charge, and again tried to lift her up, she yielded, and let him draw her on to her feet.

"Come along," he whispered reassuringly.

"Oo', *too*, Gilly-boy," she murmured back.

"All right, I'll come with you fast enough, only come on. And I say, can't you pick up those trapesing things of yours ?" for the long white folds of Jan's nightdress were streaming behind her over the floor.

He half-carried, half-led her, and they got across the floor and nearly to the door which divided the two rooms. How he was going to hoist her into her own bed, between the two guardian ones and their snoring occupants, Gilly did not yet know, but so far Jan herself had at least been acquiescent. Unfortunately, just as they were reaching the door, the curtain of the window nearest it again blew in, and one long crooked branch of thorn-tree which grew immediately outside showed in sharp, forked blackness against the void.

At sight of it Jan stopped dead short, shook from head to foot like a bit of aspen, then, without a word, cowered suddenly down on to the floor, hiding her face in her nightgown.

This time Gilly was seriously displeased. He was not going to put up with any more of her nonsense, he said to himself. He had told her to come along with him, and she *must* come. It was a girl's business to do what she was told. That was what they were for.

"Look here, you just get up and come on!" he whispered, with a peremptoriness only subdued by the necessity of extreme caution.

Jan glanced up pitifully. Terror, like a goblin, seemed to sit, almost in a palpable form, in those big luminous eyes of hers. "No, Gilly-boy, no! *It—It—*" she murmured.

"*It!* What's *It?* There ain't no *Its* about! that's all stuff and nonsense! You just come along this minute, Jan, when I tell you"—and he once more tried to get her upon her feet.

Again the window curtain stirred, and suddenly Jan—

the undemonstrative Jan—flung her two little arms passionately around his neck as he leaned over her, straining at them with all her strength, and drawing his head down towards her.

“Gilly-boy! Oh, Gilly-boy, I love oo’ so! Oh, I *do* love oo’ so! You wouldn’t—you wouldn’t—give me up? you wouldn’t let *It* have me? You wouldn’t—you wouldn’t?”

There was no mistaking the agonised thrill of that voice. It seemed to come from some dim subterranean gulf of apprehension, some pre-natal horror of the unseen, older and deeper than anything that could possibly have visited Jan in the course of her own short and eminently sheltered little life.

It affected Gilly, and this time, to his credit be it said, rather on the side of pity than of any more purely personal sentiment. The touch of those two agonised little hands seemed to awaken something new within him—a feeling for Jan which, if it had existed, he had certainly never himself been aware of—that he was destined, as it turned out, never quite to lose again. It was a new and unrealised fibre of family love vibrating within him for the first time. Henceforward, though as yet he knew it not, “fader” had a rival.

“Of course, I wouldn’t let nothing touch you, you little Silly-Billy,” he said affectionately. “Don’t be afraid! I’m a-looking after you. There ain’t nobody else here—nobody at least awake.” And the moonlight heard the sound of a shamefaced kiss.

So far nothing could have been better. Unfortunately, Jan’s terror had again reached a point at which it utterly

refused to be controlled, and she continued for several minutes longer to moan and sob pitifully, still clinging tightly to him with both hands. Gilly began once more to lose patience with her.

"I say, *do* stop that sickening noise! Haven't I told you there ain't nothing to be afraid of? I believe you're trying to make *me* fwightened!" he added indignantly. "Yes, that's just what you're doing."

"No, Gilly-boy! no!" Admiration, something almost amounting to adoration, seemed to cry out to him in that beseeching voice, to look up at him out of those appealing eyes.

It stirred afresh this new feeling for Jan which was beginning to glow within him. "I swear I wouldn't let nothing come near you, you little donk," he reiterated earnestly in a whisper. "Not that there *is* anything, of course," he added by way of parenthesis.

They sat on the floor for a while longer, both of them close together, a brown head against a pale golden one. Obviously it was impossible that they should continue, however, to sit there for the rest of the night, and Gilly, as the person in command, was moved presently to renew his remonstrances.

"I'd let you back into my bed like a shot, you know, only that there'd be such an awful wow about it in the morning," he murmured remonstratingly into her ear. "You wouldn't want to have them jawing at us, or bovering, would you?"

Even in the abyssmal depths of her terror that argument was not without weight with Jan, and she moved a little, as if to get up. A glance towards the window and

its crooked thorn branch brought on, however, a fresh fit of shivering, and she cowered back. "I *can't*, Gilly-boy, I *can't*," she wailed.

"Well, I'm going by myself, then."

He waited a moment to see whether this ultimatum would have the desired effect, but, as Jan merely continued to shiver and to hide her face, he disengaged himself from her grasp, and stepped on to the intervening door, leaving her sitting upon the floor, watched over by the perturbed but faithful Finn.

Gilly marched past the door, and into the middle of the room beyond. Then he suddenly halted. Whether or not it were due to the contagion of Jan's terror it was humiliating to discover that it was a very much more formidable proceeding to walk about in the moonlight by oneself than even with a terror-stricken Jan clinging on to one's arm. He gripped his courage, however, in both hands, and looked about him with an air of unconcern. What *could* there be to be afraid of in a room at one time of the day or night more than another, he said to himself indignantly.

The windows being here shut the moonlight spread itself in a duller and more diffused fashion. It really was ridiculous how different the room *did* look somehow to what it did in the daytime! For one thing the two larger beds, instead of being nice and flat, had long, humpy ridges on them, telling of their occupants, while the little intermediate one suggested to his mind some small deep well or empty hole. The drapery, too, lay in the very oddest heaps upon the chairs, with shoes sticking out under skirts—objects capable of being constructed into the most

ghoul-like forms, with heads and arms at unaccountable angles, if looked at long enough, and Gilly's eyes were always admirable instruments for performing feats of this kind.

A sudden conviction came over him that in leaving Jan sitting alone upon the floor he had acted a very unbrotherly part, and had better go back to her at once. This proper and amiable impulse was combined with other and less avowable ones—a wish to get away from that room at any cost—a still more idiotic desire to rouse up the occupants of its beds—to hear their voices—to shake off by some means or other this horrid, unnatural feeling of being in an unknown and alien place, in some unknown and alien universe.

He compromised matters by following the first of these suggestions and returning quickly to Jan. She was still just where he had left her, curled up upon the floor, her feet tucked under her nightgown, and one arm round Finn, who looked up, so Gilly fancied, with an expression of reproach as he shuffled back to them.

Three minutes later Jan was settled comfortably into Gilly's bed, and he was covering her with all the blankets and quilts he could find, was telling her to go quickly to sleep, and that he would sit by and take care of her. Then he clambered for the third time upon Finn's cot, and sat there dangling his legs, whistling softly to himself, and looking out at the moonlight. He had quite made up his mind that he was not going to sleep any more that night, but this is one of those resolutions much more easily made than kept, and, as a matter of fact, he presently rolled over and slept soundly for several hours.

When he next opened his eyes the daylight had come ; the moon had retired, and, as he rubbed his eyes with a prodigious yawn, one long thin ray of sunlight—the first for that day—shot across the eastern end of the island, and began to spread in a small golden pool upon the top of the knoll which surmounted it.

Gilly lay awhile longer, this time genuinely awake, thinking over a variety of things and people—chiefly of fader, mummy, and Jan, persons who seemed to have all suddenly taken on new aspects that morning, alike towards him and towards one another. Finally, he got up, dressed himself without making any noise, and prepared for the usual early round of the island.

About a quarter to seven o'clock Mrs. Brown started suddenly out of her sleep with a final and portentous snore to find a small upright figure standing beside her bed completely and correctly attired, even to an overcoat.

"I say, Mrs. Brown, Jan's gone to sleep in my bed. She's all right, so don't you go waking her up for nothing. I'm going out to find Mr. Moriarty."

The figure had turned round and departed again almost before Mrs. Brown had sufficiently shaken off the fumes of sleep to realise clearly who it was. Despite the rather humiliating experiences which have been recorded against him during its earlier hours, Gilly may fairly be pronounced to have taken a distinct step forward along the road towards manhood that morning.

PART II

CHAPTER XII

TELLS OF THE ARRIVAL OF MR. GRIGGS

IT was about a fortnight after the unprecedently hot and heady night whose doings have been recorded, that a new inmate unexpectedly descended upon Inishbeg ; one destined to have a not inconsiderable influence upon our hero's future growth and history.

Life in the interval had been drifting along in its own sleepily fascinating fashion. Mr. Phil had spent most afternoons on the island, and he and Gilly had recently discovered a new and highly delectable playground. One of those caves which had figured in a late-recorded panic, now happily forgotten, was found to be approachable by water. Here Gilly, to his own abounding satisfaction, was able to scramble out of the boat upon the tide rocks, roughened with acorn barnacles, and so to the mouth of the cave ; Mr. Phil the while sitting amongst his rugs in the swinging and swaying boat, while the red-cheeked giant, Tom Devitt, held it tightly on to the rocks with his boat-hook.

It was a spot only possible to visit in fair weather and at low tide, but whenever these conditions suited Gilly clamoured to return to it, indeed a playground more evidently created for his behoof and satisfaction it were difficult to conceive. At his own particular request the boat which brought them would occasionally be rowed away round the corner—obviously for ever—and he would

be left alone—a castaway, or a pirate—cut off from any possible rescue or attack by land, the smooth reddish rocks going up sheer upon three sides, the waves running excitedly up the sloping mouth of the cave, following him, and forcing him to take refuge in some of its higher recesses. What the fate of a Gilly would have been who had to take his chance there at high tide and in rough weather, hardly bears thinking of, but given the right conditions, the entertainment was as safe as it was exciting, the mere suggestiveness of the *genius loci* being enough to start highly coloured pictures out of brains much less addicted to such works of art than his.

Upon the particular evening upon which the thread of this history is resumed, Mr. Phil had left Inishbeg rather earlier than usual, and Gilly had consequently been reduced to his own rather inadequate resources for entertainment. Finn and he had gone in search of that commodity to the harbour, where he had clambered, as upon a previous occasion, to the top of that thick post built into the little pier ; which done, he sat swinging his legs to and fro, and thinking of nothing in particular.

The tide was full, and the little island wore its customary evening aspect—a look of wild, yet at the same time of gracious serenity. The sea still showed traces of recent rough weather in a swell which even upon this sheltered side of the island sent greenish curves right up towards the roots of the fuchsias and juniper bushes, at one spot even threatening to engulf a mass of mesembryanthemum which hung in amaranth-coloured curtains over the lichen-covered rock.

Mr. Moriarty had gone for his usual evening rounds ;

the two other men, his subordinates, had left for the night ; Tim also had gone to the mainland to pay a visit to his family, and a not unagreeable sense of solitude and desolation reigned around Gilly. Suddenly he became aware that the island was being vociferously hailed from the mainland. Shouts and yells in variously pitched voices reached his ears from the landing-place, which was barely half a mile away, though screened from sight by an intervening line of rock.

He ran to summon Mr. Moriarty, who thereupon made haste to get out the larger of the two remaining boats. Seeing that he was now the only other man left upon the island, Gilly claimed a right to be allowed to go too and to steer, an accomplishment in which he considered himself to be making remarkable progress, and much preferred to the inferior and more laborious one of rowing. Although his bedtime had arrived, the plea for once was allowed, and they started together, Gilly sitting back in prodigious dignity, with the tiller ropes in his hands, and an agreeable consciousness of being able to pull the boat right out of its proper course, or even upon the rocks, should he so desire.

A strange car, not either of the two local ones, nor yet one from the hotel at Darragh, was seen to be awaiting them at the landing-place. A pile of remarkable-looking luggage, tied to the well by pieces of string and haybands, revealed itself as they approached. The crowning object of this pile was a singular structure of iron with a widely gaping mouth, behind which netting was discernible. Beside the car stood a short, alert gentleman, young evidently still, yet set and sturdy looking as regards his figure rather than youthful. His hat was off, presumably for the enjoyment

of the evening air, and the first thing that Gilly noticed—which indeed wholly fascinated him—was the extraordinarily bristling effect of the hair, which seemed to stand out all over the stranger's head like the bristles of some exceptionally spiky hearth-brush.

Every professional loafer in the vicinity, and not a few of the more responsible householders—owners of the various cottages which lined the road beyond the harbour—had gathered upon the spot to discuss the new arrival. Amongst these the boy perceived several recent acquaintances of his. There was that exceptionally ragged old lady with the black dodeen, whom he had met upon the path to the salmon-leap ; Mr. O'Shea, the smith, a gentleman who squinted badly, was there, and no less than seven rather black-faced members of the tinker's family—persons against whom Tim Moriarty had always specially warned him. Mrs. O'Dwyer's sister-in-law, the one who sold striped sugar-sticks and pitchforks, was to be seen in the background. Others, too, were there, but not one of these were able to distract Gilly's attention for a moment from the remarkable-looking stranger with the bristling hair. In spite of this he allowed Mr. Moriarty to go forward alone and address him, hanging back himself rather sheepishly near the boat. That some important, not to say exciting, topic was under discussion, became immediately evident ; the newcomer speaking rapidly, in a peculiarly rasping voice, which to Gilly appeared for some reason to belong naturally to his spiky hair. What did it mean ? and what *could* he want there at that hour of the evening, and with all that luggage ? he wondered. He couldn't expect them to ask him over to stop with them at Inishbeg surely ?

That Mr. Moriarty was himself both perplexed and perturbed became speedily clear. Gilly caught the word "letter," "letter" repeated several times in tones of urgency. Now, that no letter of any importance had been received lately at Inishbeg, he felt pretty confident, certainly none telling them to expect a visitor. It was all very mysterious, but it was also, he thought, uncommonly tiresome, especially with such a lot of dirty grinning people about, and he began to wish that Mr. Moriarty would make an end of his talk, would return to the boat, and would let the strange gentleman drive off on his car wherever he chose.

It soon became apparent that this certainly was not to be the result of the dialogue. On the contrary, the stranger's persistence after a time overcame the old gardener's hesitation. The car was paid off; part of the pile of luggage was, to Gilly's no small dismay, placed in their own boat, the rest made over to the charge of the most responsible of the householders present till it could be sent for, and Mr. Moriarty, the stranger, and himself embarked together for Inishbeg.

The entire strength of its establishment—Mrs. Brown, Hemma, the cook, Mrs. O'Dwyer, and Willum: Jan was safely in bed—had gathered in an amazed group in the porch as, having left the boat, they were seen advancing up the path to the cottage, Mr. Moriarty and the stranger laden each of them with a big bulging portmanteau, Gilly himself bringing up the rear with a knapsack in one hand and a green collecting box in the other.

Astonishment sat hard upon every face! Upon Mrs. Brown's something was visible besides astonishment. She alone, so Gilly imagined, appeared to be not without

suspicions as to the meaning of this unprecedeted incident. Becoming aware that a genial hospitality was scarcely the prevailing sentiment awaiting him, the newcomer paused abruptly upon the doorstep, his hair and attitude equally alert and defiant.

“Good evening!” The tone in which the salutation was uttered made it seem less polite than provocative. “This—er—respectable person tells me that no letter has been received desiring you to expect me. Very neglectful, I must say. Not that it matters in the very *least*.”

To these observations a dead silence succeeded. Not a soul present uttered a word, with the exception of Mrs. O’Dwyer, who was to be heard muttering, “Oh, my God!” “The Lord save us all!” and similar inopportune ejaculations in the background.

This absence of all response seemed to have the not unnatural effect of exasperating the stranger. “At least I conclude some of you are acquainted with your master’s handwriting!” he exclaimed, in the most aggressive of tones. “Look here, missus, look at this letter.” This time Mrs. Brown was personally addressed, her air of greater importance, or possibly of greater hostility, seeming to mark her out as the chief of the group.

To get at the pocket which contained his credentials it became necessary for the newcomer to release one of his hands. His commanding eye fell upon Willum. “Here, young man, carry this indoors, and mind you keep this side uppermost!” he exclaimed, and—Willum obeyed like a lamb.

The letter found, it was handed over to Mrs. Brown, who retired with dignity to read it in her own apart-

ments, official respect towards any person pretending even to the name of gentleman struggling visibly in her demeanour with smouldering hostility. The rest of the group thereupon dispersed to their duties, like a covey of startled starlings, and the newcomer entered the cottage, and turned into the dining-room with the air of a conqueror.

Gilly had retreated to his own bedroom, and stood there by the window, drumming his fingers on the glass, and feeling both puzzled and angry. Who *could* this strange gentleman be? Was he by chance, he wondered, a relation? an idea which he immediately rejected with ignominy. He had not chosen to ask any one for an explanation; at the same time he felt not a little aggrieved that none had been offered him. Did they all take him, he asked himself, for a baby in arms.

A not particularly agreeable form of enlightenment awaited him. Five minutes later Mrs. Brown burst into the room without any warning. Her cap was awry, her face scarlet. Seeing him she rushed forward and flung her arms with a torrent of tears about his neck.

“Oh, my lamb! my boy! my sweet little Lord Gilly! Such a thing for to go for to ‘appen to us! And never a word of notice, not to me nor to nobody else; not one! Which I will say, I never would have believed it of his lordship, nor of her la’ship, not if the king had have come an’ have sworn it to me! Sending us *such* a gentleman too! which if he *is* a gentleman is more than I believe, nor shall! After all my years and years—I that took you direct from your very wet nurse, my precious!—an’ a takinger baby I *will* say I never had to do with, nor one more loving to his Nan Nan! Who

gave you the very first toy ever you had, my pet—a baa lamb it was, which I remember well, seeing that I bought it with my own money off Messrs. 'Olt & 'Iggins, that had a toy-shop then in North Audley Street, upon the left-hand side, not many doors from where you turn out of Oxford Street! To go for to use me so! I that have watched over you night an' day all these years! I shall have to give her la'ship warning, I know I shall! A stranger set over me, an' such a looking one—an' all so suddent like! Oh dear! Oh dear!"

Gilly's disgust, and his efforts to escape while all this was being literally poured over his head will be as easily imagined as it can be put into words. The worst of it was that it left him still utterly in the dark upon the essential point. A chill of apprehension had shot through him when he first heard himself thus profusely pitied, and his thoughts had sped away with the speed of lightning to India. This passed off as Mrs. Brown went on, and he gathered from her somewhat mingled utterances that nothing could well have happened to fader or mummy, seeing that she was evidently for some reason exceedingly offended with both of them. He succeeded at last in escaping from her grasp, not without some display of physical force, and stood opposite to her, his coat awry from the struggle, but an unwonted expression of determination legible upon his face.

"I don't know what you're talking about, nor what you're making such a fuss about, Mrs. Bwown," he exclaimed indignantly, "I wish you'd explain. What *has* happened? What *has* this gentleman come here for? Is anybody ill? Why can't you speak plainly?"

"Which I couldn't speak plainer, my precious, not nohow," exclaimed the sobbing woman. "And as to *me* making a fuss! How never could you suppose that after all these years an' years I could 'elp being a little 'urt at being robbed of my child, my pet, my own little Lord Gilly?"

"Robbed of me! Rubbish! I don't belong to you," the boy cried indignantly.

Mrs. Brown stopped sobbing, drew herself up, set her cap straight, and shot a glance of reproof and indignation in his direction. "Which are words those that I never expected to 'ear from your lips—my lord!" she replied, in a tone of profound but respectful asperity. "I that 'ave never needed to be shown my place, never in all my born days, here nor helsewhere, nor 'as never pretended for one moment to be other then I am. Did I say that I was your lordship's hequal—you that is a Earl's son"—the more recent fluctuations of the family at this moment flashed across her mind—"which is, I mean to say, a Earl yourself! and it is as a *Earl* I suppose, an' nothink but a *Earl*, I shall have in future to speak to you—you that was my own boy, my pretty, pretty baby!" and at the pathetic picture thus conjured up by herself Mrs. Brown again sobbed audibly.

For a person to whom "boveration" was the worst of all earthly evils, this, it must be owned, was severe. The injustice of it, moreover, rankled.

"I'm sure I never wanted to be made an earl of," Gilly exclaimed indignantly. "Did I ever ask anybody to make me one? If I am, how on earth can I help it!"

"Which I never supposed for one instant that you

could help it, nor would desire so for to do—my lord!” Mrs. Brown replied, clinging tenaciously to her weapon of offence. “All I say, and did say, was that, ‘aving always done my best, an’ ‘aving watched over you an’ Lady Janetta all these years—although, as I am fully aware, of a ighly inferior station—to be all at once put aside like this—no notice given, not a month or a week, or even a hour—well I do call it ‘ard, very ‘ard—tutor or no tutor.”

“Tutor!” exclaimed Gilly, enlightenment for the first time flashing in upon his mind. “Do you mean, Mrs. Bwown, that that funny, spiky-looking little man has come here to be my tutor?”

“Far, very far am I from saying that you ‘ave not arrived at suitable years for to be made over to the care of *gentlemen*,” Mrs. Brown continued, in the same tone of forced and resolute elevation. “You being now nine years of age the seventeenth of last month, an’ no conveniences for education to be had on this barbarious sort of a island, so that if you must stop in such a place—though why you should, or any of us, ‘eaven knows—I don’t deny but what you might ‘ave need of a tutor. An’ if so be that one of the family ‘ad ‘ave come an’ ‘ave introduced him proper, an’ he a suitabler, agreeabler-mannered gentleman—why, I am not the woman to have stood in his way for a moment, not for one single instant moment.”

“A tutor!” Ideas were flying pretty briskly to and fro in Gilly’s brain while the concluding portion of this harangue was going on. He had almost given up expecting to hear any more about such an infliction. Before

leaving London there had been, he knew, a good deal of discussion as to what was to be done with him before he went to Eton. He remembered that mummy had wished him to be sent to some clergyman—Hon. and Rev. something or other, he had seen the address on an envelope. It was fader who wouldn't have him go there, and had sent them to Inishbeg instead. It was fader, too, who had settled with Mr. Moriarty that he was to run about over the hills, and to go for rows, and to do various other things independently of Mrs. Brown and the nursery party. Mummy, of course, was English, whereas fader was Irish, as he himself was also—*natuwally*. Thus far all was clear. Not being a fool, Gilly realised, moreover, that if he was to go to Eton as soon as he was old enough, he must be learning something in the meantime. He ought, therefore, it may be said, to have been prepared to hear further upon the subject, only that people are not, as a rule, prepared to hear further about tiresome subjects—especially people who are only nine years old. They wait, as Gilly waited, till the Undesirable actually falls upon them out of the skies. Now, however, that was precisely what had happened. The Undesirable *had* fallen upon him out of the blue, and with a crown of spiky hair upon its head! Should he ever be able to get on with any one who looked like that? the boy wondered dismally; who had such a queer, creaky voice, too, for all the world like a corncrake? He doubted it in his own mind strongly, and shrank, as if from a handful of nettles, before the notion. Here, too, at Inishbeg, where they would have to be together all day long! Oh why on earth couldn't

they have found some one a little more like Mr. Phil, *his* Mr. Phil, he thought ruefully. If fader could only see Mr. Phil he would know that half-an-hour with him would be better any day than thousands upon thousands of hours with queer-looking, corncrakey, spiky-haired people!

He had escaped from Mrs. Brown while this inward colloquy was going on, and—seeing that she was far too flustered to think of ordering him to bed—he ran down the passage, and took refuge in the book-room, where he would be safe from invasion till the fuss of the arrival was over, and he could return to his own room without molestation.

It was nearly dark there, though a glow from the water at the foot of the coose still strayed across its green walls, and made entangled patterns upon the backs of the books. Slipping quietly in, Gilly shut the door after him and slid into Mr. Phil's big arm-chair. What was he going to do? he asked himself, or was there anything he *could* do. One thing was clear to him. He must talk the whole matter over with Mr. Moriarty. Mr. Moriarty had read fader's letter; Mr. Moriarty had talked to the strange gentleman at the landing-place; consequently he must know something about the matter. Moreover, with Mr. Moriarty there were no "boverations" to be feared, as there always were with Mrs. Brown. Sitting still in the dark he could hear a considerable amount of running to and fro in the passage and in the rooms beyond. Now and then the voice of the newcomer—sharp and sudden as the bark of a dog—became audible, ordering this, displacing that, rearranging everything evidently to his own liking.

Gilly's sympathies began to flow out very strongly towards Mrs. Brown, little as he liked being kissed and wept over by her. How comfortable they had been, and *what* a good time they had had lately, he thought with a sigh. Now everything would be turned upside down. Everything would be different ; quite different—probably *beastly* !

No one came to look for him, and he sat on and on in the book-room for quite a long time, curled up in Mr. Phil's big chair. The noises sank at last ; the cottage grew quiet ; the reflections from the water became more and more dim and mysterious. Happily Gilly had too many substantial matters to think about to-night to have time for indulging in any imaginary tribulations. At last he grew extremely sleepy, so, as soon as the noises had died completely away and he felt sure that the passage was free, he stole back to his own room, and went to bed. His plans had by this time worked themselves out to something like clearness. He would get up, he resolved, half-an-hour earlier than usual the next morning, and make his way out to Mr. Moriarty before any one else in the cottage was awake.

CHAPTER XIII

TELLS OF A MEETING BETWEEN A FRIEND AND A TUTOR

AN unlooked-for experience awaited him next morning. When, having jumped out of his bed, Gilly had got the window curtain open, lo ! another curtain appeared to be hanging out of doors in front of it ! The whole space around the cottage was deep in white fog ; not a vestige of any sea was to be seen, not a hint of the hills upon the other side of the Sound, even the little bit of the island itself which lay between his window and the sea was only discernible as a shapeless greyness, with here and there a few darker uprights, the ragged masses of vapour tearing themselves into fragments ; joining together again ; curling in at the open window, and growing apparently thicker and thicker every minute.

He stood still, eyes and mouth opening, as he gazed at this wildly entangled white world which had so suddenly evolved itself. It was his first experience of a genuinely opaque sea-fog. Would it begin to melt presently, he wondered, fixing a pair of still sleepy eyes hopefully upon it. It did not show the least disposition to do anything of the sort. On the contrary, it was his own brain which, as he stood there staring up into vacancy, seemed to melt and merge into it insensibly. He felt as if he were being carried up amongst those whirling, winding masses of

clouds, farther and farther off, and away over the sea, he knew not where, and it was not without an effort that he plucked himself back again to the earth.

He was not going all the same to be baulked of his plan, he said to himself. Mr. Moriarty would be sure to be out, fog or no fog. The best thing, therefore, to do was to dress as fast as possible ; to slip out of the dining-room window as he had often done before, and to be off before he was stopped. He looked at his watch. To his dismay instead of being half-an-hour earlier than usual he was nearly three-quarters of an hour later ! It was close upon half-past seven. He ran to the cold tub set ready for him overnight, and began tugging at his nightshirt to get it off.

Suddenly the door flew widely open, and the new tutor entered. He had got on his shirt and trousers, but no waist-coat or coat, while his hair seemed to be more on end than ever.

“Breakfast in quarter of an hour ! First room to the right. Make haste, little ‘un !’” He was gone again before his startled pupil had got over his first bewilderment at this undreamed-of appearance.

It brought Gilly’s wits together with a species of shock. He felt reminded of what had happened to him the day Gillespie, the Scotch gardener, had plucked him down the black bank by his heels ; the two sensations were, in fact, to his mind very similar. Anyhow he must obey ; that much was clear. He picked up his big sponge and let the water run over him from neck to heels, a process which at least had the effect of dispersing the cobwebs that his momentary immersion in the fog had collected. Then having scrambled into his clothes and raced rather per-

functorily through the rest of his toilet, he ran out into the passage.

He found Willum laying breakfast for himself and the new tutor in one of the unused bedrooms, which the latter in his first Napoleonic survey of the cottage had decided was in future to be reserved for his own and his pupil's eating-room. If not precisely suitable for the purpose it was the only place available, the drawing-room being now the daytime territory of the nursery party, while the dining-room had, by the same lightning eye, been pitched upon as the future schoolroom. Lady Shannagh's book-room had been expressly forbidden by Lord Dunkerron under any circumstances to be invaded.

An unwonted clatter of cups and saucers made itself audible from the opposite side of the passage; also a voice—evidently Mrs. Brown's—raised to a considerable pitch of lofty indignation. Gilly felt strongly tempted to run in and see how they were all getting on without him. He forbore, however, from a mixture of reasons. Partly it was from a feeling that he was after all upon his promotion, and must not impair it by any babyishness; partly from an old-time feeling of loyalty towards Mrs. Brown. He did not want to go peeping in on her when she must be feeling, he felt certain, extremely uncomfortable.

Willum presently reappeared, bringing in hot dishes, and a cheerful aroma of fish and fried bacon began to fill the room. Next followed the new tutor, his coat and waistcoat now on, and he and his pupil sat down together to breakfast.

For Gilly it was distinctly an appalling meal! He sat at the foot, in front of the hot dishes, the newcomer at

the lady's end, consequently before the teapot. What was he expected to do? he wondered. At the nursery breakfast Hemma always helped the bacon and eggs, while Mrs. Brown poured out the tea. He tried with a spoon and fork to shovel a piece of fish upon a plate, but had only begun to do so, and had barely time to drop about half of it upon the table-cloth before his companion, whose eyes appeared to be on all sides at once, darted upon him, pushed him swiftly aside, arrested that rather disastrous operation; set one portion, the smaller one, for his pupil upon one plate, the larger one for himself upon another, and darted back with it in his hand to his tea-making. There was something positively giddying in the silent rapidity with which all these movements were effected.

After breakfast they adjourned to the dining-room, henceforward to be known as the schoolroom. The two big portmanteaux, which proved to be chiefly full of books, were already there, and the tutor immediately proceeded—still with hardly a word—to tumble these out upon the big table. Next, having fixed upon a buffet in the corner as the only place at present available to hold them, he set the boy with a wave of his hand to the task of picking them up, according as he himself laid them out in order upon the table, and replacing them side by side in the same order upon the buffet. Gilly peeped into one or two as he was doing so. They seemed to be full of pictures of what he mentally summed up as “insides.” Some of these were insides of sea-beasts, some of insects, also of other and larger creatures. There were “outsides” too, but even these were mostly unfamiliar to him, the names below being of the most appallingly sesquipedalian character. Had he

got to learn all those awful names by heart, he wondered, and was *that* what the gentleman had been sent to Inishbeg to teach him ?

In this fashion the morning passed—one of the longest mornings Gilly ever remembered in his life ! The fog still lay thick over the island, but began to thin off towards midday, the bombarding armies then confining their operations to the sea itself. There had hitherto been no opportunity of getting out, and before that hour arrived the eleven o'clock post had brought two letters to the island, one for Mrs. Brown, the other for Mr. Moriarty, both telling them to expect the newcomer. Some error of calculation with regard to the Indian mail had occasioned the whole confusion. Thus the matter was settled. The new tutor was now officially, no less than by his own efforts, in the saddle, and would, it was quite certain, stop there.

Before this Gilly had ascertained two not unimportant facts about him. The first was that his name was Mr. Griggs ; the second that if not obeyed on the instant his small, and otherwise not very remarkable eyes could emit two red and decidedly formidable sparks. He longed, as he had never longed since their friendship began, for Mr. Phil to arrive. There was nothing now, he realised, to say to Mr. Moriarty, seeing that these letters had come, and that the whole matter was therefore cleared up. Mr. Phil, on the other hand, would certainly, somehow, be able to help him ; Mr. Phil would understand ; Mr. Phil would be sure to say or do something to make matters better. Released from his duties in the schoolroom, he wandered up and down all the afternoon like some small masculine Calypso,

seeking and sighing, and gazing in all directions for the longed-for boat.

Owing to the fog invasion, this desirable event did not take place that day, but the following one Mr. Phil sailed over as usual in the afternoon to Inishbeg.

Perceiving the boat while it was still afar off Gilly flew ecstatically to the landing-place, so as to be ready to help him to land, and the moment that operation had been successfully performed, flung his arms round his friend, with an effusiveness hitherto unknown in their intercourse.

Phil Acton laughed, pleased, but also a little puzzled ; the boy's expression struck him too as different from usual, though no reason for it had as yet occurred to his mind.

“Well ! here we are again !” he said, shaking him by the shoulder. “And what fool's game have we on hand this afternoon ? Top knoll ? Smuggler's cave ? Speak the word !”

Gilly shook his head. “Some one's come,” he mumbled.

“Some one ? What sort of a someone ?”

“His name's Mr. Griggs.”

“And who may Mr. Griggs be ?”

“I don't know who he *is*, only he's come.”

“He's not stopping here is he ?”

“Yes, he is.” A paralysis of some sort seemed to have laid hold of Gilly's tongue that afternoon.

“Well, go on. What's he stopping here for ?”

“Fader's sent him.”

“What to do ?”

“To—to—” the words were drawn out at last, as if by a drag net—“to—to teach me.”

Mr. Phil stopped short in his walk and whistled. “Oh

ho, that's the way of it, is it?" he said. "A tutor! A real, live, full-grown tutor! But this, it must be quite clear to you, young man, means promotion. No more Mrs. Brown, eh?"

"I suppose not," Gilly answered soberly. Had Mrs. Brown after all bovered so *vey* much? he wondered.

"No more Mr. Moriarty!"

"I shall go round the island with him *every* morning," the boy proclaimed stoutly.

"No more mooning about with sick people out of boats! No more listening to silly yarns! No more making geeses of ourselves, pretending to be smugglers."

"Yes! yes! yes!" This time Gilly's vehemence out-flew discretion, and he clutched at his friend with a vigour which threatened to send him headlong. As in a vision he seemed to see Mr. Phil, also sailing away to India, and never, never coming back to Inishbeg!

"Steady, young man! Remember you have to do with a cripple. That's all right"—as Gilly showed signs of acute contrition—"You've not damaged me very extensively. Come along now, and take me to make acquaintance with this Mr. Griggs of yours." Then—seeing that the boy's expression was anything but hilarious—"Poor man, how I pity him," he went on in a tone of commiseration; "think of having a Gilly-boy on one's hands the whole day long! Gilly-boy at breakfast, Gilly-boy at dinner, Gilly-boy all the time, and he a grown man! O lord!"

Gilly didn't laugh. "I don't believe he likes me—much," he said gravely.

"Possibly he may get over that in time. Even I have learnt, you know, to endure you."

"Oh, you! You!" Gilly shouted joyously, conviction ringing through every fibre of his voice.

They were by this time slowly mounting one of the narrower paths leading to the cottage. Suddenly the sound of footsteps brushing against twigs became audible a little distance off, and a minute later the conspicuous head of the new tutor—all the more conspicuous from being hatless—came into sight upon the top of a little rocky slope nearly perpendicularly above them. Perceiving them he swung briskly downwards, plunging over the knolls of rock with a vigour which sent shoots of envy into poor Phil Acton's soul.

Gilly hung back, shyness evidently invading him, and it was left to Phil to make his own introductions.

"Good day," he said, holding out his hand. "I've just been hearing of your arrival from this young man. I'm stopping myself with a cousin across the bay yonder, and I drop in here sometimes of an afternoon to loaf about the garden. I'm a bit crippled at present, as you may perceive. My name's Acton."

Social ease was not apparently one of Mr. Griggs' most salient characteristics, but he shook the hand extended to him, and nodded his head in a friendly enough fashion, and they moved all three together up the path.

"This is the first time, I suppose, you've been in Kerry?" Phil asked presently, turning to look a little closer at the newcomer.

"Rather! Never set foot in Ireland in my life till yesterday morning. I've been asked over though, as it happens, more than once. A man belonging to the Museum at Belfast—one of the bosses there—offered me a post

as sub-curator not long since, but I wouldn't take it ; told him 'twasn't good enough—the pay, I mean. Take any interest in biology yourself ? ”

Phil shook his head with an air of regret. The voice of the newcomer, rasping as a file, was affecting his sensitive nerves rather acutely. He looked as hard as nails and as keen as mustard, he said to himself. What else was he ? he wondered. Not a public-school man, surely ?

They had now reached a turn where the little harbour lay immediately below them, pearling under a light breeze into a sheet of diamonds. Mr. Griggs stopped and looked down at it with a rapid gimlet-like glance, as if some formula that he had been particularly anxious to work out was likely to be found lying at the bottom.

“ The minute they told me 'twas for an island this marquis-man was looking out for a tutor I made up my mind to have it like a shot,” he said, in a tone of off-hand explanatoriness to Phil. “ You don't know or care about these things, you say—men don't, of course, unless they've been regularly through one of the science schools—but there's a tremendous lot of marine work, I can tell you, waiting for any fellow who gets the time to do it. Bernard Smith has been working up the Cœlenterata lately, but most of the invertebrates have been disgustingly neglected in England. The way those Germans cut us out at every point is sickening, sir—simply, I tell *you*, sickening.”

Gilly, though not a little surprised at this unlooked-for volubility on the part of his new tutor, came to the conclusion that the talk was going to be decidedly dull,

so presently drifted away towards the kitchen-garden, where Tim Moriarty was generally at this hour to be found.

Left *tête-à-tête* the two men sat down together upon a bench. Phil Acton offered a cigar, which his companion accepted. He was beginning to feel himself in rather an anomalous sort of a position here. This hard-eyed, aggressive little scientist was somewhat out of his own line, and as an inmate of Inishbeg the incongruity of his presence there struck him as positively grotesque. Could he do anything towards smoothing the path of poor Gilly's initiation into what seemed likely to prove a rather thorny path of erudition, he wondered. If so, he would like to give his evidently forlorn and scared little friend a helping hand. Instead, therefore, of following up Mr. Griggs' last remark, he merely nodded acquiescingly, and presently started again upon quite another tack.

"You'll find him an uncommonly loveable little chap," he said abruptly, nodding his head in the direction Gilly had taken.

Mr. Griggs turned and stared at him as if wondering what in the world he was talking about.

"You're not a relation of theirs, are you?" he asked quickly.

"Of whose?"

"Of these Dunkerron people—the marquis and the rest of them?"

"Not the least in the world."

"Oh, I thought from what you said, you might be."

"I've never set eyes, as it happens, on any of them except this boy."

"Neither have I. It was Richhardt you know—Dr. Richhardt of the Natural History Museum—who wrote to me about the situation. It seems the marquis had set his mind upon getting hold of some one who could give this kid of his some notions about natural history—nursery geology and physiology, I suppose—that sort of thing. Any way it happened to suit my book well enough—salary decent, you understand, and all that. But by Jove, sir, it seems a rummish sort of a business now I've got here! Not a soul in the place had been told to expect me, and, upon my life, when I got to the door there was an old woman standing in front of it who I thought would have scratched my face! She glared at me like an old she-panther!"

Phil laughed. He also privately thought it a rummish business, if not exclusively from the same point of view. "That was Mrs. Brown, of course," he said; "you see she idolises the boy."

Mr. Griggs stared again. "What the deuce has that to say to it?" he asked roughly. "She couldn't suppose I wanted to come and dry-nurse him in her place."

"Something like that, I suppose; jealousy is not discriminating."

"Jealousy! The woman must be mad!" The new tutor ran his fingers violently through his bristling hair. "And not even Irish, I believe," he added, evidently indignant at the absence of a solution that would have accounted satisfactorily for every anomaly.

"Far from it. As English as you could wish!"

"I don't care a damn, sir, whether people are English or Irish, only I'll have decency, or I'll know the reason why!"

Phil nodded. In the depths of his soul he was wondering what precise refinement and ultra-elaboration of decency this irascible little companion of his had hitherto been accustomed to.

"Lord Dunkerron would not expect anything of the kind from you, I'm sure," he said soothingly.

"Well he needn't! I've too much to do with *my* time I can tell you to dry-nurse any man's kid—marquis or no marquis."

Phil laughed again. This explosive little mortal was really entertaining, he said to himself.

"I suppose you like teaching, on the whole, though, rather than otherwise?" he inquired tentatively.

"Teaching! Why the kid's barely nine!"

"Isn't that old enough to begin to be educated?"

"O Lord, yes, of course it is, a sight *too* old for the matter of that. Don't you be afraid but what I shall stuff as much into his little head as ever it can hold! *I* shall earn my salary, never you fear."

"I've no fears upon the subject, neither is it in the very least my business. As I've already explained to you my being here is the merest of accidents."

"All right, I understand. Don't mind me. The fact is Richhardt swore to me, you see, that if I took the situation I should have any amount of time for my own work, otherwise I shouldn't have come. No, sir, not a yard!"

An idea which had been growing in Phil's mind for some minutes past had by this time become so pressing that it positively craved utterance.

"Excuse me," he said, "but you're not, I suppose—not—American, are you?"

Mr. Griggs gave utterance to one of his bark-like laughs.

"If to be born at Leeds, of a Leeds mother and a Leeds father, makes a man an American, then I *am*," he replied with the air of one who delivers a crushing rejoinder.

"I see! My stupidity, of course," Phil Acton hastened to say.

"You're not the first man though that has asked the question," the other went on in a more conciliatory tone. "Fact is I spent eighteen months—rather more than eighteen months—three years ago in the States—Melchisedec College, Indianapolis. Yes, sir, I was upon the staff there. Splendid lot of men they have too. Shouldn't wonder if I returned to them some day or other."

"Ah, I understand." Phil, as a matter of fact, did understand, or fancied that he did so. A Leeds start in life, sharpened and finished up with Melchisedec College, Indianapolis, seemed to him to account for a good deal in this rather electrical personality beside him.

"I believe I'll go on to the cottage now, and have a rest and a bit of a read before I sail home," he said, getting up rather stiffly from his bench. "They're good enough to let me use that book-room, you know, that's at the end of the passage. By the way, I shan't be in your way, shall I, if I turn up now and again of an afternoon?"

"Great Scott, sir, no! Thankful to see you, I'm sure. It'll be a charity to have a man of my own age to speak to. D'you swim?"

Phil shook his head. Like a flash swept through his brain the recollection of sundry swimming and diving feats accomplished, and not, after all, so very long ago. The bluish sheen of the surface, the agate-like cleaving below, the dark coppery opacity at the bottom—for an instant he saw them all vividly.

“They don’t encourage me to do much in the swimming line—now,” he said, rather grimly.

“Ah, s’pose not.” A gleam of commiseration for a moment softened the awl-like sharpness of the new tutor’s eyes.

“What was it? An accident?” he asked.

“A fall,” Phil replied, and turned to mount the remainder of the path towards the cottage.

Mr. Griggs accompanied him until they had reached the porch. Then, as Phil with a wave of his hand, passed on and along the passage, he turned abruptly off, and retraced his steps in the direction they had come—possibly with a view to retrieving his pupil.

CHAPTER XIV

IN WHICH THE HERO STUDIES ZOOLOGY BESIDE A LAKE AND THE COSMOS UPON A ROCKING-STONE

STICK your head lower! *miles* lower, young 'un, than that! Watch till he breaks surface. The minute that you see a bubble you make a punch on that bit of paper and cry 'One!' I'll check him with my watch."

They were hanging over the edge of a reed-fringed lough, which stood by itself in the middle of that heather-covered slope which spreads below the Kilma-crenan Rocking-Stone. Gilly was flat upon his stomach across one tussocky corner of this lough, Mr. Griggs was hanging far out over the water at another. Both of them had their eyes fixed upon the surface. The pupil's fingers were twisted rather nervously round a stray tuft of grass, so as to hinder himself from toppling bodily in; the tutor, on the other hand, with his body curved into the aspect of a four-footed beast, was poised actively upon hands and feet, his athletic little frame raised into an arc, as he gazed with whole-hearted absorption into the depths below.

The object of these elaborate gymnastics was—a water-beetle! To be accurate, it was an entire family of water-beetles, the maturer members of which were in the habit of ascending every two or three minutes to

the surface, there to secure the bubbles of air which they required in order to carry on their operations at the bottom.

“The Respiratory Action of the *Dytiscidæ*,” so ran, or was to run, the title of an article which Mr. Griggs proposed to supply to a forthcoming number of one of two or three biological periodicals to which he was an occasional contributor. That his style was scarcely regarded as sufficiently literary and elegant even as a medium for sound information he was himself aware. Indeed the finikin and truly ridiculous fastidiousness of scientific editors was a favourite subject with him of animadversion. “Dogged does it,” however, here as elsewhere, and doggedness, grim, indomitable doggedness, there unquestionably was in this case, enough to carry its possessor over even more serious obstacles than this.

Any one to whom the type is unfamiliar would have felt puzzled at the patience which so habitually restless and irritable a little mortal was able to summon up upon these occasions. As a worker with scalpel and forceps Mr. Griggs thought well of himself, but it was as a first-rate and first-hand out-of-door observer that he really saw himself clambering up the slippery pole of science, and becoming visible to a revering posterity. At the present moment he was watching for the next *dytiscus* to rise to the surface with all the concentrated, muscle-straining tenacity of a terrier intent upon a rat-hole. That simile, by the way, comes a good deal nearer to accuracy than is the habit of similes. The four-footed attitude, the bristling head thrust forward, the eyes agleam with pin-points of eager light, being all of

them eminently suggestive of a particular type of terrier —the rather coarse-haired and irascible variety, the kind that it is never advisable to approach too quickly or without proper precaution.

A widely different type from Finn! That superior animal was at the moment lying a little way from the lough, watching the vagaries of his two-legged companions with all a dog's tolerance, but with something more than a dog's habitual perplexity over the doings of mortals capable of interesting themselves in such intolerable futility. Gilly's behaviour especially seemed to disturb him. He went forward several times and remained, with forepaws stiffly extended upon the edge, ready for a further plunge whenever that evidently perilous equilibrium absolutely failed to maintain itself.

The heather was not yet in full flower, but a strong dash of colour had broken out in the course of the last few days. Far as the eye could see a dim purpureal haze seemed to hover immediately above the ground. It rolled up the nearest slope ; broke against the foot of the big Rocking-Stone ; swept on again to accentuate the top of the ridge beyond ; dipped and was lost for awhile in certain hollowed-out recesses ; then reappeared in higher and more sun-smitten spots, bathing with its amethystine wash the glacier-dropped granite boulders, which rose here and there like so many dull-coated islands in an empurpled sea.

The vacant, dreamy-looking landscape seemed to swallow up the three inconspicuous little figures set down casually in one corner of it, much as the ocean might have swallowed up three similar ones flung out

to die upon its surface on a raft. To Mr. Griggs the beauty or ugliness of his surroundings, it may be mentioned in passing, had about as much significance as the beauty or ugliness of his native jungle has to a tiger. His muscular little back continued to rise higher and higher, his sturdily-built legs straddled out wider and wider as he bent down over the lough. He looked less like a terrier now than like some hitherto unclassed form of anthropoid vertebrate, awaiting identification. The flaps of his shooting-coat hung tail-fashion between his legs ; his bullet-shaped and close-cropped head seemed on the point every moment of disappearing bodily into the water ; his blunt-featured, rather common type of face seemed to grow keener, sharper, and more concentrated as he bent it lower, and lower still, in the zeal of research.

Suddenly he straightened himself, looked at his watch, shut it with a click, and resumed the ordinary aspect of humanity.

“Eleven times in seventeen minutes. That’ll do. I’ll work it out. You can cut off, sonny, and amuse yourself. I’ll call you when I want you back.”

Gilly thereupon obediently pulled his head back from his own corner of the lough. He was feeling, he discovered, uncommonly giddy, so turned over on his back by way of an agreeable variation after nearly half-an-hour spent upon his stomach. This new position brought his eyes almost directly opposite to the top of the ridge below which he could see the great Kilmacrenan Rocking-Stone standing out by itself, and looking quite astonishingly big in the absence of any other object with which to compare it. Immediately below it he noticed a small dark

hollow, from one end of which he fancied that he could see a pale blue puff of smoke emerging. Farther on the glitter of three or four other loughs or tarns caught his eye, all of them evidently smaller than the one beside which he was lying.

It was the Rocking-Stone itself which chiefly fascinated him. His eye kept returning to it again and again. At last the desire to go to it became too strong to keep within his own breast, and after a rather tremulous minute of hesitation, found its way to his tongue.

“Mr. Griggs.”

The tutor looked up, a pencil in his mouth, a frown on his forehead, two red gleams gathering in his eyes.

“May I go up to the Rocking-Stone there? I should hear you, you know, if you coo-ed for me.”

“You may go to Jerusalem for ought I care, if you’ll learn not to speak to a man when you can see he’s calculating,” was snapped back at him.

The boy waited for no second permission. Picking himself up from the ground, he ran hastily off across the heather, Finn following joyously at his heels.

It was good enough going here, for the heather was continuous, and there were no bog-holes to speak of. Gilly chose, however, to run over the ground a great deal harder than he need have done, an idiotic impulse urging him to put as much ground between himself and the lough as possible. As a consequence he stumbled several times, and at last, catching his foot in some twigs, measured his length upon the heather. The bog being a dry one, no harm, however, was done, and he quickly picked himself up again, to the visible relief of

Finn, whose nerves had been evidently shaken by the recent irrational performances.

It was so unusual for Gilly to be absolutely by himself outside his own island, that a feeling of adventurousness began to grow upon him once he had got well out of reach of the lough and of his peremptory preceptor. Turning to look back from the top of the first dividing ridge he crossed, he could see the somewhat stumpy figure of the latter still silhouetted against the soft silvery greyness of the water. From this distance the lough looked like a Cyclopean eye set in the otherwise featureless waste. Mr. Griggs might have stood for some Avatar of the modern world, an embodiment of the scientific spirit, newly alighted upon one of the waste places of a darkened and unregenerate Past. Gilly naturally did not trouble his head with any such far-fetched notions. He had rather enjoyed watching for the water-beetles, despite the giddiness it had produced. The ways and doings of similar neighbours were still of unfailing interest to him, undamped by any notion that such an interest was undignified, nay ridiculous. If Mr. Griggs would have only not made him feel every moment that he was an idiot and a baby, he would have trotted at his heels contentedly all day long. As it was, he infinitely preferred these out-of-door duties, no matter how unexplained and incomprehensible, to the rather awful hours spent *tête-à-tête* with that gentleman in the schoolroom. What he did not like, and had not got used to, was being poked, rapped over the knuckles, plucked back, and jerked forward, all quite suddenly, and with barely a word to tell him what he had been doing wrong. Per-

haps, too—though of this he was not sure—he did not quite like being called “Kiddy,” “Sonny,” and “Young ‘un,” the modes of address upon which his preceptor usually rang the changes.

What with this unwontedly easy fashion of intercourse, upon the one hand, and the highly ceremonious style recently assumed by Mrs. Brown, his notions about deportment were getting decidedly mixed! Partly by way of punishment, but chiefly as a means of marking her disapproval of the tone adopted by the new tutor towards her master’s children, that admirable woman had set up a code of respectful observances which nearly had the effect of driving her late unfortunate nursling crazy. Every time that duty obliged her to knock at the schoolroom door, she executed one of those curtseys hitherto exclusively reserved for visitors—doctors, duchesses, or the like, who from time to time had visited the Brook Street nursery. As for “my lording” and “your lordshiping” him, those weapons of offence simply rained upon Gilly’s head from morning till night, so that if by some unknown but brilliant contrivance he could have annihilated the whole peerage at one fell swoop—the entire fabric of British aristocracy with all its ways and works—assuredly not one stone of it would have survived to be the comfort and support of its faithful admirers.

He was turning these matters over rather disconsolately in his mind as he stood balancing there upon the top of a tussock, Finn having gone off to investigate some rabbit holes. The spot he stood on was high enough for him to be able to look straight up the ridge, and to observe that from this onward the ground was very steep, and

that he had therefore a stiffish climb before him. A little to the right of him a small stream, hopping down its stone-filled channel, attracted him, and he turned accordingly in its direction, so as to be able to climb beside it. It proved to be the tiniest of streamlets, so small that he could step backwards and forwards across it with the greatest ease. It was a companionable little trickle though, and made cheerful chattering noises as it hopped over its stones, or skirted those too large to hop over ; disappearing sometimes for a minute or two, to re-emerge a dozen yards farther on with a chuckle of satisfaction hardly louder than that of the questing bees which were booming in and out of the heather along its edge.

Gilly followed the stream until he could follow it no farther, the way to the Rocking-Stone lying now more to the right and beyond its farther bank. The heather was much taller here, rising nearly to his waist, and hanging out in heavy fringes as the ground grew steeper. After wading through it for half-an-hour and getting thoroughly out of breath, he emerged at last on top of the first of the two Kilmacrenan ridges ; so flung himself down panting upon the ground, turning eastward as he did so to see the way by which he had come.

The bay seemed to him to have grown enormously big and long ! He could see right down its shining course till it bent towards Kenmare, while upon the other side it extended farther still, far as his sight could reach, till it merged into a quivering vagueness which could be nothing less than the open Atlantic itself. Somewhere out there, he knew, but invisible on account of all the hills between, lay Valentia, the place from which the big cables started for

America. He was able to name a good many of the places now, for not only had Tim told him all he knew, but Mr. Moriarty had taken the trouble to go some way up one of the hills on purpose to make matters clearer to him. That was Lamb Head with the dark shadows on it, and that was Ardgroom across the bay, and there, nearer to him, where all those little tumbled hills peeped out one behind the other, was the region that Mr. Moriarty no less than Tim had assured him really all belonged to fader.

In what sense it belonged, and what in terms of hard cash it was worth, Gilly naturally had not troubled his head to ask. The fact had not at the time even made much impression upon him, but now, as he looked at that heathery country with the light playing bo-peep over it, a sudden excitement began to stir and grow. His hot cheeks grew hotter ; his heart under his jacket began to swell and beat with an odd eager feeling of pleasure and exultation. The sensation was about as vague as any sensation could be, as vague and with scarcely more connection with ordinary life than if he had been told that his father owned, and that he himself might therefore one day look to own, some territory in Sirius or Orion. None the less it pleased, and moreover comforted him, Gilly's self-respect being rather badly in need just then of comfort, having fallen upon unpleasantly miry places. That Mr. Griggs really considered him to be a semi-idiot—too stupid to understand the simplest things—he felt convinced, and writhed humiliatingly under the conviction. He wanted desperately to do something that would convince, not only that authority, but every one to the contrary. A vague but beautiful dream visited him as he lay on his back there amongst the heather, a dream in which he

saw himself receiving Mr. Griggs somewhere, he did not know where—in a castle perhaps amongst mountains like a castle in a fairy tale, or in a ship with enormously big sails. He saw Mr. Griggs' look of surprise at all these grandeurs, and still more at the wonderful manner in which he, Gilly, had come on, had learned to talk, and to steer, and to do all sorts of extraordinarily brilliant things. Then he felt suddenly rather ashamed of himself, at the same time realising that he was still a long way below the Rocking-Stone, so jumped up, and, calling hastily to Finn, set off running towards it as fast as he could go.

This time he reached it without any further delay, got upon the foot of it, and clambered upwards through a little channel at the side, which enabled him to get right out upon the big flat surface of the Rocking-Stone itself. The wind, which he had hardly felt as long as he was below, blew here quite sharp and keen, and tingled upon his cheeks as he stood at last upon the top, looking triumphantly round him. He could see ever so much farther now, right away to the islands at the mouth of the bay. Skariff he knew was the name of the nearest of these, the island with the big double peak, one of which was much the highest and most pointed of the two. Other islands, the names of which he did not know, lay scattered here and there like dots in the shininess, and far, far away, like the ghost of a spire, shone a needle-like point which might or might not be that of the Great Skellig.

Turning to look immediately below him he saw that there really was a house there—a small white-washed cabin, nestled down into the hollow and sheltered by the big block upon which he stood. A girl with a petticoat flung shawl-

fashion around her shoulders came out of the cabin while he was looking, and remained shading her eyes and peering down into the valley. Gilly felt inclined to give a sudden yell and to enjoy her surprise when she should turn round and see him standing up there all by himself upon the top of the Rocking-Stone. He did not do so, however, partly from shyness, but still more from a fear of being interfered with in some way before he had succeeded in making the stone rock, which was the great event and excitement he had come up all this way to enjoy.

He scrambled on, accordingly, over its surface. The rock was so nicely balanced upon the stone below it that once the right point was reached even his weight would, he knew, cause it to move. There was a lumpy piece near the middle of it, looking as if the great smoothing iron had once upon a time had a handle which had got broken off. It took him several minutes to clamber over this, and he stopped again for a moment when he reached the top of it before slipping down on the other side.

The sky was full of big clouds, packed rather closely together. Lower it grew clear, except for a few thin bars which crossed it above the tops of the islands and parallel to the sea rim. Gilly peered up at the clouds immediately above him, shutting one of his eyes as he did so in order to see whether or not they were moving. He thought that they were, but so slowly that it was difficult to be quite sure. The sun had got hidden behind them, save at one place, where a long glittering shaft struck right across the heather and flew on to light up the sails of a little white boat racing along towards Kenmare. It all looked so light and big and empty, he thought, as empty as if there

were no other people left in the whole world except just the man sailing that boat, himself standing up there upon the Rocking-Stone, and the girl in front of the little cabin with her petticoat over her head.

He had by this time crossed the central knob, and was creeping along towards the point of the rock, when all at once—and at the moment unexpectedly—he felt a movement. It was very slight, at first barely perceptible, but it went on increasing and getting every second stronger and stronger. To his excited little imagination it was as if a bit of the hillside had got loose, or as if he were upon an island, and that the island had suddenly unfastened itself from its base and begun to move. More and more the surface upon which he was standing seemed to tilt and bend, till it appeared as if the next moment must see the whole great block of stone hurled bodily down the hill, crashing into the cabin below, and carrying him with it, to be pounded to bits, of course, as soon as he reached the bottom. Then followed a slight jog, a jog which told him with a feeling of heavenly relief that the rock had reached its limit, and that it would not want therefore to travel any farther.

From immovability to movement, and back to immovability again, the whole process had lasted possibly a quarter of a minute. To Gilly, crouched there by himself upon the top, that slow stir and movement of the great smoothing iron upon its pivot had come, even though he had been expecting it, with startling effect. It seemed to him to be an altogether different thing from what it had been when he had come there before with Tim Moriarty. Through and through his brain had swung, during those few but

crowded seconds, an ineffaceable sense of vast masses in the act of slow movement. Had he with his own eyes beheld the revolution of his own earth—that incredible fairy-tale of schoolrooms—he could scarcely have been brought more convincingly into contact with the notion.

A sense of something remote from himself, something planetary, something crushingly vast and incomprehensible, seemed to have suddenly laid hold of him. It was unlike anything that he had ever felt before, an impression, as it were, outside of himself, and for which he had no clue. He remembered, indeed, that he had felt something of the kind once in a dream, a dream in which he had seen himself swept along in a whirl through the sky, as the leaves in autumn are swept in whirls about the grass. He was not dreaming now though ; no, certainly he was not. Was it true then, really *true*, that old story, and not merely one of the inventions people make up to tell children ? This solid world that he was standing on, that sun over yonder, those stars hidden away just now by the daylight, did they really all of them move ? Really ? Really ? And, if so, *why* did they move ? Did they know they were moving, as he and other live things knew when they moved ? Questions flitted excitedly one after the other—mere notes of interrogation—Why ? why ? why ? Who and what was he himself, if it came to that ? What was the sense, meaning, and explanation of the whole thing ? Of heaven and of earth ? Of everything and everybody ?

Conversions come in this fashion, but there was nothing particularly spiritual about our small Gilly's impressions that afternoon. Awe of a sort there may have been, but it was a natural, not a religious awe. It woke his brain,

it stirred his senses, it filled his little imagination to overflowing, but otherwise it left him pretty much as it found him. No doubt, had an appropriate magnet been at hand, the sensitive needle might have responded quickly enough, but such a magnet was wanting. He remained where he was for some time longer, crouched in the middle of the big rock, and thinking, thinking, harder than he had ever thought before. Thoughts seemed in fact to go darting in and out of his brain of their own accord, as fishes might do through the meshes of a net. Then he suddenly remembered that he must have been a tremendously long time away, so, scrambling cautiously to the side of the rock in order not again to disturb its equilibrium, he started off down the hillside in the direction of the lough.

No "coo-ee" had reached him, still he felt sure that Mr. Griggs must have been expecting him to be back long before this. At the foot of the first ridge he was met by Finn, looking rather shamefaced and wagging his tail in an apologetic fashion. Gilly had no time to scold him now, however, but ran on as hard as he could, trembling rather as to the reception which might be awaiting him. Happily, it was all right. Mr. Griggs, as speedily became evident, had not even missed him. He was sitting cross-legged upon a dry tussock, writing away at feverish speed, and with a very stumpy pencil, his notes upon the Respiratory action of the *Dytiscidæ*.

CHAPTER XV

DISCOURSES UPON A DON QUIXOTE AND A SANCHO PANZA OF MODERN LIFE: ALSO UPON THE DELIGHTS OF MARINE ZOOLOGY

THE toys with which we mortals amuse or console ourselves are incalculable, and that fascination which Inishbeg had won over Philip Acton's mind almost at the first glance did not show any disposition to wear off. On the contrary, it appeared to be one of those adhesive attachments which, striking once, cling for ever, and certainly the passing days had so far only served to accentuate it. He had fallen in love with that little sea-invested speck of rock much as he might have fallen in love with a woman, had one been good enough to draw near him at the precise moment. Young Mr. Acton's experiences of falling in love with women had so far, I may hasten to state, been distinctly limited. An acquaintance with a turn for diagnosis might have predicted of him that whenever the attack did come he would have it badly, but up to now the god had shot his arrows beyond him, or over his head, rather than into his heart, which perhaps was, under the circumstances, just as well.

A vacuum so serious leaves all the more room for other vagaries, and this fancy for Inishbeg was the latest of these. We all know how widely the capacity for attachments of this sort varies, and this young man possessed, as it hap-

pened, the precise turn of mind which is bound to receive them, if at all, in rather an exceptional degree. It was not alone Inishbeg which inspired it. Without a drop of Irish, far less of Celtic, blood—to his own knowledge—in his veins, the taste, sentiment, fascination—call it what we will—of this South-Irish landscape had come to mean to him what as a rule only one landscape, and that a native one, comes to mean to a man in the course of his lifetime. It had stolen into his breast ; had nestled, or had seemed to him to nestle into his very bones. It affected him with a sort of topsy-turvy home-sickness ; he felt as if he had been waiting for it all his life, and that it had come home to him at last. Its entire scheme ; its endlessly varying light and colour ; its ancient greyness and seclusion—especially when contrasted with that young, indomitable army of waves battering eternally against its sides—its buttresses of rock diapered with dots and streaks of colour ; even its evident uselessness, its very indifference to man and his poor activities—all these things suited him, and seemed to fit into his own current mood. Was there really something about this sunset-facing region different from other regions ? he asked himself, or were such idealisations of landscape merely what more than one of his own contemporaries would have picturesquely summed up as “Tommyrot”—a projection in other words of his own fanciful, most likely just then quite absurdly sensitive consciousness ?

Laugh at himself as he would, explain it how he might, it is at least certain that his surroundings pleased him, and that Inishbeg, as a sort of quintessence of the rest, did so especially. Thus, though he went there less regularly than before the new tutor’s arrival, he by no means dropped out

of the habit of sailing over to it of an afternoon. There was Gilly, too, to be thought of, no less than Gilly's island, and in this case there was a fair certainty of the sentiment being returned—possibly with interest. As for Mr. Griggs, that redoubtable scientist was at once a source of profound entertainment and of almost equally profound irritation to the visitor. The two men stood at exactly opposite poles of the intellectual sphere. Mr. Griggs' views of the universe exhibited, so the other man considered, a crass crudity, a hardened philistinism, which simply left him gaping. Scientifically, politically, socially, he was the purest—Phil Acton often in his exasperation vowed to himself the vulgarest—of all possible products of scientific wrong-headedness. Up-to-date, too, as he considered himself, his standpoint was essentially that of the scientific positivism of some forty or fifty years ago. Physiology for him covered the whole ground. Psychology was not ; reverence—for rational people—an exploded superstition ; idealism another way of spelling idiocy ; and his honest scorn was at the service of all who were capable of even uttering words like "mystery" or "riddle" in his presence.

In all these respects Phil Acton stood as his exact opposite. That elf or puck which hovers over beauty, which points towards mystery—which is capable of discovering the former even where it is practically invisible—was never very far from his elbow. He could not indeed command its services—which of us can—but it was there all the same, and even in his most dilapidated moods some of its iridescence hovered dimly around him. To cheat life—if by any means such cheating could be accomplished—of some of its prose was with him the first, the most spon-

taneous of instincts. That the two men should have failed under such circumstances to understand one another was scarcely mysterious! If, as has been said, mankind is divided between the Sancho Panzas, with a sound grip on reality but no ideals, and the Don Quixotes, with the instinct of ideals, but without any decent hold on reality, then the two types may be said to have got themselves fairly embodied in these two men whom chance had made just then the chief instruments in the modelling of our still plastic hero's mind and character.

And that small personage himself? Can there, one is inclined to ask oneself, be a more ridiculous, a less profitable pursuit than to try and define what is in its nature indefinable? to set down in hard dull words, that which has in reality no bounds and no precise limits? Let us dissect, if we can, the last thrill of a thrush's song; write down, if we flatter ourselves we can do so, in the language of science the precise meaning of the colours and scents of flowers, but let us in heaven's name leave alone that intangible product of moods and fancies, a child's or a young boy's mind! With Gilly, as with all the young, ideas came, never one at a time, but in troops; they tumbled over one another, glanced and gleamed for a moment, and were gone. He knew them during the instant that they crossed the sensitised plate of his brain, but, once passed, they became to him as dreams.

It was in those early morning runs of his, either alone or with old Moriarty, that the abstraction which grown-ups call "consciousness" most nearly took shape and reality within him. It will, I suspect, be found to have been the same by any one who can look back and see himself—a

little, solitary, confident figure—set against the still dream-like greys and pinks of early morning. With Gilly as with all of such young persons, it was the merest gleam, and then nothingness again ; a momentary impression, like the impression which had visited him upon the Kilmacrenan Rocking-Stone, only different too, not nearly so startling or revolutionary as that had been. “Me!” “It!” “Inside!” “Outside!”—that was about the whole of it! Just a flash, like the flashing of a match struck by somebody in the dark middle of the night, and then as rapidly blown out again.

Like others under similar circumstances the mere thrill of conscious virtue counted for a good deal in the exceptionality of such moments. Can there be a more desirable condition of affairs than to feel that you yourself are awake, astir, and out of doors while other people—the nominally more important members of humanity belonging to you—are still asleep, snuggled despicably amongst their bed-clothes? Pride stands condemned by the moralists, but pride is not a bad instrument to work with, especially where the material upon which it works is itself decent. That Gilly belonged by nature to the Don Quixotes rather than the Sancho Panzas of humanity need hardly at this stage of his adventures be set down. His father fell into the same division, and Gilly was emphatically his father's child, perhaps even more emphatically his grandmother's grandchild. As regards these two whom a sort of blind chance had set up as temporary rivals for his small allegiance, there could be no serious comparison. All the cards had been put into one man's hand before the other had appeared upon the scene. This sounds scantily just towards Mr. Griggs, but fortunately that superior observer was quite

indifferent to such trivialities. Scientists as we have already heard him say, have something better to do with *their* time than to dry-nurse other men's kids.

For Phil Acton that opprobrious phrase carried no terrors. He preferred, and moreover was quite aware that he preferred, the company of a child in nine cases out of ten to that of an elder or a contemporary. The type of mind to which such a taste comes naturally is as rare, probably, as it is distinct. It comes out, moreover, quite as clearly in youth and bachelorhood as in advanced years and fatherhood—possibly even more clearly. As to the question of how far—given the temperament in an elder—children or boys respond to it, there we stand upon one of those dimmer, less frequented bypaths where dogmatism becomes stupidity. That—the right qualities for inspiring liking being assumed—the next most indispensable of all qualifications is easy accessibility, so far seems certain. Fathers, uncles, elder brothers, masters, pastors, it matters not who or what they are, may each and all of them possess every other virtue which can be heaped upon a pair of shoulders, but if not readily accessible they are in this respect as nought. Here Phil Acton shone. Sick or well, a more accessible human being probably never trod the earth. Even the small Jan—most secretive and undemonstrative of little mortals—was upon condescending terms with him. She would trot deliberately of her own accord to the harbour whenever there was a report that he was expected, and would stand upon the pier, regardless of remonstrances, looking down with serious benevolent eyes from under her big hat as he clambered slowly, often painfully, ashore.

As for Gilly, start him off in Mr. Phil's company, with all other eyes and ears safely out of reach, and his shyness vanished like morning mist. His tongue on such occasions raced along in one continuous tide of talk. Questions, ideas, wishes, dreams, fancies, projects, ambitions—they rushed tumultuously, one after the other, bubbling and sparkling over their pebbles. His own father belonged to the same eminently accessible type of being, although in his case other—in Gilly's opinion utterly hateful pre-occupations—had interfered sadly with their intercourse. Now in Mr. Phil he seemed to find another and a younger fader, and—oh, joys of joys!—an invariably, almost, a professionally idle one!

Into those friendly ears flowed, whenever he got the chance, the whole of the boy's otherwise pent-up need for self-expansion. Can we overestimate the value of such a kindly, such an understanding safety-valve? Hardly, I think. For boy or girl, especially perhaps for boy, it is at once the rarest and the most exquisite of luxuries. Intimacy with an equal is all very well—may be a joy, or may be quite the reverse—but intimacy with one who stands to you in the relation that Mr. Phil stood to Gilly is another and a widely different sort of joy. Constitutionally shy, moreover, as this boy was—with a sensitiveness almost like the sensitiveness of some sea-creature whose tactile apparatus has to serve it for eyes and ears—the comfort of finding some one who always understood and who never snubbed, counted for more than any of Mr. Phil's more really exceptional qualities. If Lord Dunkerron had hit upon a somewhat arid vein in his effort to provide his small heir with some notions as regard to nature and her

methods, luck had certainly served him extraordinarily well in providing so all but ideal an antidote to that rather rasping and excoriating régime !

How Gilly would have fared had he been left, say for a year or two, under the sole charge of a Mr. Griggs it is not easy to predict. That he needed a certain amount of hardening, by way of alternative to the atmosphere of petting which otherwise surrounded him, may be taken as undeniable. Unfortunately Mr. Griggs' notions of discipline were neither consistent nor—strange accusation in the case of so redoubtable a scientist—even scientific ! That he intended to do his duty by the kid, and as a consequence to earn every farthing of the kid's father's money, may be taken as certain. That he ever treated Gilly more roughly than he would have treated a young brother or cousin of his own, there is no need to suppose. Unfortunately the effect of those perfectly well-meant shovings, rappings, and snubbings—especially of the last—was to cause his pupil's mental petals to shut up as tightly as those of a May flower under an unlooked-for snap of cold. As for talking for five minutes to Mr. Griggs as he talked habitually to Mr. Phil, Gilly would as soon have thought of stroking that gentleman's stubbly head—an action, which in moments of intense shyness, did occur to his mind, always with the conviction that it would feel exactly like laying one's hand inadvertently upon a hedgehog !

All this was the more to be regretted seeing that the boy really had a turn for the very things that Mr. Griggs knew and could teach him best. If he failed to remember any of the sesquipedalian names, if tables of classification made little or no impression upon his brain, on the

other hand he had come into the world with the eyes and instincts of an observer. His interest in everything that ran on four, or on any additional number of legs—everything that swam, crawled, dived, scuttled or wriggled—was greater than it even usually is at his age, the age that comes before sophistication, before that elaborately stupefying process which we are in the habit of complacently epitomising to one another as the education of a gentleman.

Here Phil Acton came to the rescue. If, as the result of a very costly, and in his case perhaps exceptionally successful education, he knew even less of such matters than Gilly ; if the ways and works of the fellow-creatures that lived, moved, and reproduced themselves in his neighbourhood were dark to him, at least it is to his credit that he did not plume himself upon that darkness. He was in the mood, too, in which a man welcomes a new pursuit, and the more widely different from his old ones the better. The genial breath of Kerry was doing its work ; his broken-down nerves were slowly piecing themselves together again, and with them his interest in the world as a more or less amusing planet was beginning to bud and stir. Some pursuit that was not too absorbing and that could be carried on in the open air was the desideratum, and here such a pursuit stood ready to his hand.

He and Mr. Griggs got on better, moreover, than the mere catalogue of their discrepancies may have led a reader to suppose. To Phil Acton, in the enforced vacancy of his days, it was a resource to dip again and again into that briny little receptacle of undigested facts which the other man called his mind. That his own more humanist lore was anathema to Mr. Griggs—an object of

immeasurable scorn and reviling—he was well aware, but cared nothing about. In another respect too his new acquaintance suited him better than many a more tactful companion. Sick to the soul as he was of himself, he was even more sick of being regarded as a subject for commiseration; a family derelict; a disabled member of the human pack; variations of stupidities which had again and again flicked him as with a lash across the raw. Such an experience was impossible here. Mr. Griggs talked, when he talked at all, for victory, or from the desire of hearing his own views as they projected themselves into another pair of ears. His own private and particular shop first, all other shop afterwards—so long as it was strictly practical, without loose fringes or metaphysical flummery—these were his topics, and upon these he was always fluent, and sometimes actually brilliant.

Moreover, his youth—he wanted several years of thirty—shone out of him at every pore, expanding itself with a sublimity of self-satisfaction which had apparently never known check or diminution. It flashed and glowed; it pointed in all directions at once, and gleamed about his head like a rapier in the hands of a swordsman. For poor Phil Acton with his sick distaste of life, and his still greater distaste for that bundle of aching bones which he had to drag about with him, this confidence acted less as an irritant than as a tonic. He too—though he had almost begun to forget the fact—was young! younger, as a matter of fact, by four whole years than this epitome of youthful confidence beside him! He had of late been lapsing, and rather hating himself for lapsing, into one of those inward moods that are amongst the least escapable

products of invalidism. Without attaching himself definitely to any particular creed or mode of thought, he had been hovering more or less uncomfortably upon the skirts of them all ; asking himself questions, and failing, as was inevitable, to find any answers ; peering and peeping behind the foldings of a veil, which seemed to him to be scrawled over with enigmatical inscriptions, changing from minute to minute as a curtain that is shaken by the wind. For such fashions of self-tormenting Mr. Griggs' breezy optimism came as an alkali to an acid. To say that the latter's mind was objective is like saying that a blackbird's beak is yellow or a peacock's tail gorgeous. If for Phil Acton the veil of things was too often a wearisomely inscrutable mystery, for Mr. Griggs there was no veil at all, merely a set of serviceable partitions, sign-boarded over with useful knowledge, planking out the universe.

As a practical outcome of these rather unpractical divagations, Phil enrolled himself and Gilly as a pair of supernumeraries in the great army of science, and under that designation they contrived to spend a good many satisfactory hours, which were by no means too strenuously devoted to the pursuit of knowledge. A small creek ran shorewards upon the western side of the island, not far from the smuggler's cave, and here the retreating tide left bare a rather exceptional expanse of barnacle and mussel-covered rock, interspersed with rock-pools of alluring depth and sliminess. For Phil these last were unattainable, but a track, cut by Lady Shannagh, led by an easy gradient down the cliff side till it emerged upon a narrow spit of rock running in the fashion of a causeway, with the tide-rocks and tide-pools to right and left of it.

Here in an accommodating cleft, supported by jam-pots and similar receptacles, also by a spyglass and a magnifier within easy reach, Phil would bestow himself and his rugs of an afternoon, while Gilly—his knicker-bockers rolled to their uttermost—waded, splashed and swallowed ; exploring with eyes and fingers every recess of the rock-pools, and extracting their reluctant inhabitants, according as his own discretion, or Mr. Griggs' casually remembered instructions, might suggest. Occasionally that authority would himself descend upon his assistants, turn out their entire afternoon's treasure trove, toss most of it contemptuously back to sea, now and then picking out one or other of the smallest of its results, and bestowing it in a bottle which would return to the cottage in his waistcoat pocket. Upon these occasions the two men would sometimes fall into hot argument, Mr. Griggs' voice rising louder and louder till the rocks re-echoed with its corncrake-like tones. Oftener Gilly and Mr. Phil would be alone the whole afternoon, retreating now and then to a neighbouring recess when the squalls came racing shoreward, but re-emerging so soon as these had passed away, and only the additional shininess of the rocks remained to show where they had passed.

The "slip, slip, slip," "whish-wash-whish" of the water, barely audible when the tide was at its lowest, increasing in volume as it drew nearer, began to be as familiar to Phil's ear as similar sounds are to a listener during a long sea-voyage. The sense of remoteness from all the ordinary activities of life could hardly, under any circumstances, have been greater, and beneath that seductive influence idleness began to appear, not reason-

able only, but positively respectable. Identity seemed to go floating vaguely about; to have lost its relationship, not only with every other identity, but even with itself. At such moments the entire scheme of things appeared to be in its essence not materially different from those pictures seen for a moment upon the bubbles which the tide scatters—pictures in which the eye beholds, or fancies that it beholds, the entire story of the sea; all its wonders and its terrors, its glories, and its tragedies. Then the mirror bursts, the picture is scattered, and the rest of the story is left untold.

Passing ships or even boats there were few to be seen, but the screaming congregation of the gulls and the kittiwakes never failed them. Sometimes, too, high in the abyss of space, a gannet would reveal itself, looking as if it had emerged into existence that instant out of Invisibility. First, a dimly hovering speck poised in mid-air like a lifeless thing; then a fall, a fall that was like the falling of a meteorite, a sight to take the breath away, too swift for any eye to follow; then a splash, sending the water high in a silvery spout above the surface—after which Phil, with the aid of his spyglass, would perhaps discern far down the bay a swiftly moving brown object with a fish in its beak.

So the afternoon would pass, and if the value of what was brought back by Mr. Griggs' assistants proved to be infinitesimal, at least something survived. Hints would visit Phil Acton as he bent over his magnifying-glass—not precisely epoch-making ones, certainly, yet brain-satisfying enough. As the scale of life dwindled downwards, it seemed to him to grow wider; to sink into placid depths of

sentiency, where man and his necessities, his troubles and his arrogance, not only never had, but practically never could come. Peering over his friend's shoulder, Gilly, too, would pick up his own little quota of knowledge, less through his brain than through his sympathy—at present much the more highly developed organ of the two. Then the rising tide would drive them further up the causeway out of reach of it. The rocks and the rock-pools would get alike smothered and lost to sight under creamy volumes of water, the swirling tongues flying over all the drier rocks, and high up again towards the region of the grass and gorse-bushes. Finally, the broad shoulders and cheerful red cheeks of Tom Devitt would appear in sight, coming down the track to collect his master's boat-rugs and his master's erratic friend for the homeward voyage.

CHAPTER XVI

TELLS HOW THE HERO MADE THE ACQUAINTANCE OF AN UNKNOWN RELATIVE

LORD ROLLO MACGILLICUDDY MOORE presents his compliments to Mr. Dash Blank, and would be obliged by his bringing Lord Shannagh to call upon Lord Rollo to-morrow afternoon. A motor will be waiting for them at the Kilmacrenan landing-place at two o'clock."

Mr. Griggs turned over the document—it had reached him at breakfast-time—with a snort of disgust. The envelope bore an equally undecipherable address as regards his own name, but below it—"Tutor to the Earl of Shannagh, Inishbeg, Kilmacrenan"—was inscribed, in what might by comparison be called an offensively clear caligraphy.

"Dolts! Idiots!" The tutor to that youthful nobleman muttered in excusable indignation. Then out loud: "Ever hear of Lord Rollo Macgillicuddy Moore, young 'un?"

Gilly, who was in the act of surreptitiously giving fragments of his own grilled chicken to Finn, started guiltily, and reddened.

"Er—er—yes, I think, I *think* that he's an uncle of mine," he said hesitatingly.

"What sort of uncle? Father's brother?"

"Oh, no"—this time decidedly—"fader's not got any brother."

"Mother's brother, then?"

"No—o. At least, let me see. There's my Uncle Sidney, of course, but he's in the army ; and my Uncle Ferdy, but he's abroad now, somewhere or other ; and there's Uncle Dot, but he's only at school still ; and Uncle Hubert—he's not my real uncle, you know, only my Aunt Camilla's husband—and—"

"Well, I didn't ask for the names of the whole bally lot of them. I'm not just rushing off this very morning to make their acquaintance! It's this particular sportsman I want to know about ; the rest can wait. He expects us to go and visit him to-morrow. Consequently, I ask you who he is ?"

Gilly's face still looked blank. "I think he *is* my uncle, but I'm really not sure how," he said conscientiously. "Anyhow, I know I've never seen him."

"Never seen! Never heard! Never thought! *You'll* be a comfort to your parents in their declining years, young man, if you go on like this," Mr. Griggs observed jocosely. "Hullo, there's old Aquarius!" Mr. Moriarty had at that moment come round the corner. "He'll know, trust him. Here, Mister—a word with you, if you please. Who's"—Mr. Griggs was now at the window, with the letter in his hand, so read aloud from it—"Who may Lord Rollo Macgillicuddy Moore be, and where is he to be found? This well-informed young gentleman of yours doesn't seem to know."

Old Moriarty upon being hailed had stopped and made a couple of old-fashioned bows, one to the tutor, another, perhaps a shade more marked, to the pupil. It was the latter whom he now addressed, in a tone of rather grieved remonstrance.

"Indade, Mhaster Gilly, 'tis surprised I am to hear it, if that's so, I am indade. 'Tisn't right, sor, nor becoming. Who would Lord Roland be but your grandada's, the late marquis's brother, an' the prisen marquis, your own da's uncle. There's none in the whole world would believe but what you'd know! More betoken that, save an' except the marquis an' yourself, there's ne'er another of the name left alive, young or old, more's the pity."

"He's the boy's great-uncle, is that it?"

"That's it, sor, that's the very way of it. An' was it where he is living you were asking me? 'Tis beyont Kill of the Glens, more nor a dozen miles from this. A great house of his own he has there, an' has had these twenty years back. A grand sporting gentleman he was onct, none better in the country, no, nor so good, but 'tis a terrible sufferer he's been these years back, poor gentleman."

"Hum. Well, he hasn't left over much time for modest hesitation, so go we must, I suppose. Two o'clock sharp to-morrow mind, kiddy, is the word!"

Two o'clock sharp it was. They rowed across to the landing-place to find the entire over-worked population of Kilmacrenan prostrate before the glories of a brand new green and yellow Panhard, still in its first brazen gleam and gloss.

Into this they tumbled, Mr. Griggs, Gilly, and the chauffeur, all together upon the front seat. The monster throbbed and snorted, swallowed up the space in front of it, scattered its admirers in every direction, and they were off.

For Gilly, after the first breathless ten minutes, it was all pure joy. He forgot his habitual uneasiness in Mr.

Griggs' company ; forgot this unknown great-uncle, whose image had been haunting him all the morning ; forgot everything and everybody, except the mere bliss and rapture of going ; going, going, like the very wind, like the birds ; going, as he had never known before that anything, unprovided with wings, could go.

On they went, up hill, down hill, but always nearly due west. His little face grew red as fire with the sun and the tingling of the wind. The road streamed greyly backwards, curtseying and quivering as they whirred and howled over it. Turn after turn was left behind. Headland after headland appeared running up into invisible heights, where heather and gorse and mountain-ash seemed to be all tumbled together by the steepness. In front of them the blue-grey fiord wound and wound, seeming every moment to be upon the point of coming to an end ; then opened out again upon a new reach, and spread away further and further into the distance, its sides receding, the islands beyond its mouth growing in distinctness ; the air smiting Gilly's face, first upon one cheek and then upon the other, "smack, smack, smack," like a pair of castanets.

After about eight or nine miles they turned away to the left, where the road grew steeper, and it was necessary to slow down considerably. Finally, they came to a broad shallow river, brown as coffee but clear as spun-glass, which shot chattering to its pebbles under a big bridge. Across this bridge their own green and yellow monster ran, purred to itself like a big cat as it slid down upon the other side ; up a steep and very narrow road, where a succession of scared ass-carts fled wildly into the banks to avoid them ; halting for a moment before

a lodge ; in at a gate ; down a darkish drive, where green fingers of laurel flapped against their faces from either side ; and so came to a stop at last before a house.

Into this house they were brought by a back-door, along sundry narrow passages, and into a small room, which smelt strongly of leather. Here they were allowed a minute to brush off their dust ; then along another passage, and out on to a lawn overlooking the river, with a glimpse of the sea through an opening, and more evergreens, chiefly very elderly rhododendron and laurels, drawn closely on either side of it like a thick green winter curtain.

Here, in a big hooded chair, further protected by out-works of various kinds, Lord Rollo Macgillicuddy Moore was found sitting ; his valet, a clean-shaven, rather supercilious-looking man, standing behind his chair. Gilly's great-uncle was at this date several years over seventy. Tall and thin in frame, with a still rather handsome face, very long and very grey, a pair of sunken cheeks, aquiline nose, snowy moustache, and a carefully cultivated imperial, just a shade darker. Report asserted that in his day he had, in the accepted phrase, lived his life, however little life there remained to be lived by him now, sitting alone upon the lawn in his great hooded chair. Whether any of his dilapidations were due to early imprudences or, as he himself maintained, were exclusively the result of damps engendered fifty years back in the trenches before Sevastopol, there was no one now who could say positively. Perhaps the nearest approach to a corroboration of these out-of-date tales lay in the fact that the code of conventional decorum had no more rigid adherent than Lord Rollo. That his nephew, Lord Dunkerron, was a senti-

mentalist and a faddist he had long been as convinced as were any of the members of young Lady Dunkerron's own family. This fancy of sending his son and heir to Inishbeg was evidently the latest of these fads, fully of a piece with other and even more erratic notions which he was well known to entertain as regards the country and its people. Latterly, a report had reached him that a tutor had come to look after the said heir, who was the last sort of tutor such an heir ought to have been provided with. It was extremely probable, and just the sort of thing one would expect of Dunkerron, so his uncle opined.

Nor was this opinion changed for the better when the tutor and pupil actually stood before him. The old man's eyes lighted indeed perceptibly under their heavy lids at the sight of his grand-nephew. With his hair all tossed and roughened, his face reddened by sun and wind, his eyes lit with a gleam which even shyness could not subdue, the boy just then was a goodly sight, calculated to give satisfaction to any gentleman interested in the fate of a stock which had of late years dwindled to a dangerous degree of tenuity. The great-uncle in his hooded chair looked the grand-nephew, standing before him upon the grass carefully over, up and down, from head to heels, as he might have looked at a colt, and his ashen-tinted, sombre old visage lightened as he did so with an air of approval.

Then he looked from the boy to the boy's tutor, and the expression of approval wiped itself expeditiously off his face! The nod of recognition which he bestowed upon Mr. Griggs was of the briefest possible description. Persons who looked like that, persons who wore such clothes, and

who had that style of deportment, were the sort of persons, so a lifelong instinct assured him, whom it was desirable as far as possible to ignore.

"How do you do, Shannagh, my boy? Too old to be kissed, eh? Don't touch my chair"—for in his anxiety to respond politely to the hand outstretched to him, Gilly had inadvertently brushed against it. "Enjoyed your run in the car, eh?"

His grand-nephew's reply was the merest of mumbles, but his face was more eloquent, and spoke for him.

"Hum, I can see you did. Your father hadn't time to get one, I suppose, before he left for India. You shall have another run before long. I'll call for you in it likely enough myself some day. By the way, what about your riding? You *can* ride, I hope?"

"I used to ride with mummy in the park sometimes. I don't ride vewy well—" Gilly's lisp always grew acute in moments of embarrassment.

"The park? Not much fun in that, eh?" Lord Rollo chumped his teeth up and down over his imperial for a minute or two reflectively. "Have you ridden at all since you came to Ireland?" he next inquired.

"An island the size of a postage stamp ain't exactly the best place in all creation, in *my* opinion, for horse exercise!"

It was Mr. Griggs' first contribution to the conversation! At the sound of that excruciatingly rasping voice Lord Rollo started perceptibly, the supercilious-looking person who stood behind his chair starting still more perceptibly. There was some excuse for both these signs of disturbance, for the tone in which the observation was uttered was several degrees more aggressive than the actual words.

"Hum, ha! You observed, I think, that—. True, Inishbeg; we must see about some other arrangements," Lord Rollo observed rather disjointedly. Good heavens, what was Dunkerron about to import such a creature? he said to himself. He must have been *mad!*

Conversation after this interpellation seemed to offer a certain amount of difficulty. Lord Rollo coughed several times; finally he glanced behind his chair.

"Fergusson."

"Yes, my lord."

"Tell John Finigan I wish to speak to him."

A neat, bandy-legged, grey-haired little man in corded breeches presented himself a minute or two later upon the lawn. A jockey in youth, then groom and stud-groom, he had been with Lord Rollo more years than either of them could have rapidly counted. About the same age in reality as his master, he looked still as tough, vigorous, and serviceable as the other man was visibly slack, helpless, and extinguished-looking.

"Good afternoon, Finigan. This is Lord Shannagh come over from Inishbeg," Lord Rollo observed affably.

Two fingers went up to Mr. Finigan's knobbly forehead, and his eyes twinkled as he grinned in friendly recognition at the boy, who thereupon promptly shook hands with him, a liberty which it had not even occurred to him to take with the superior-looking person behind his uncle's chair.

"Have I—is there anything that would be fit for Lord Shannagh to ride here?" Lord Rollo continued; an inquiry at which the old groom lengthened out both lips as though about to laugh; then apparently thought better of it.

"Trath we have not, nor the laste little hair or hoof of

one, me lard ! Sure there's naught of the size 't all, barring the little ould brown mare, an' Mat Flinn an' the other boy has the heart of her broke with taking of her up an' down the grass all day long in front of that *machine*. There's th' ould cob too, in course. Your lardship used to lay a leg over him now an' then, you may remember, but that's long since, an' he's altogether too big in the straddle, more be token, for the young gentleman."

"Is there nobody about here who would be likely to have anything to sell ? One of the farmers, perhaps ?"

"Arrah, God bless us, no, me lard, nor so much as fit to look the same side of the street as him, so they have not ! 'Tis a rale little nobleman's harse he should have, the best that money could buy."

"Hum. He says he can't ride. He's only been now and then round the London parks with his mother," observed the great-uncle.

"Is it with them legs ?"—Mr. Finigan pointed at Gilly with an air of rapture. "Will your lardship just look at the flat of his thighs ? Sure ye might put him up for the Grand National !"

At this commendation of his legs Gilly laughed, and looked somewhat sheepishly down at the knees of his knickerbockers, the only portion of those admired members which he could conveniently see at the moment. Next he looked at Mr. Finigan's own legs, and wondered whether his looked like them.

"You can't think of any one who'd be likely to have anything suitable ?" persisted Lord Rollo.

"Well, an' I can not, me lard. There does be Mr. Kennedy, you know, over beyont Dugort way. He used to

have some decent little small blood onct, though I don't know as I've heard of his owning anything worth spaking about, big nor little, this long time past."

"Ah yes, Mr. Kennedy, to be sure. I should be glad to give him the commission, too, and it's near Inishbeg. He has boys of his own, moreover, so that anything he had ought to be well broken in."

"So it should, me lard, so it should. Though if what I hear is the truth the best young gentleman he's got, more be token, is a young lady!"

"I didn't know he had a daughter."

"Aw, just a shlip, sixteen years old maybe, or less. 'Twas Mr. Byrne, Sir Maurice O'Sullivan's coachman, was telling me 'bout her not long since. It seems they had a Meath filly, a nice little bit of blood, in the stable there, that was laying herself out for to be killin' the whole of them. As for a fince she wouldn't so much as stay in the field with one! An' bedad! Miss, she came by one day, an' nothing would do her but she must ride it, an' before a month was out she had the filly shouldering to an' fro over the ha-ha near the house in iligant style, so Mr. Byrne told me."

Here the proceedings upon the lawn were again varied by Mr. Griggs, who suddenly sprang up from the seat which had been set for him—

"With your permission I'll take a look round and see if there's anything to be seen. Send the kid to hollo if I'm wanted." So saying, and without waiting for an answer, he walked off.

Lord Rollo gazed after him with an air of quite unconcealed disapproval. "What did he call you?" he inquired of Gilly.

"Kid. It's only for short, you know. Perhaps I'd better go too. He'll want me to help him if he's looking for bugs."

"Bugs?" repeated his great-uncle.

"Insects—creatures, I mean. I can't remember their names, but Mr. Griggs knows them all, of course."

"He doesn't seem to know yours."

To this observation Gilly merely fidgeted about a little with his feet. His tutor's taste in appellations was not, as we know, invariably to his own, but he was not going, he determined, to admit that to-day. Mr. Griggs anyhow belonged a lot more to him than this old uncle of his whom he'd never seen in his life before. The little old man with the knee-breeches, who had admired his legs, had by this time gone, and really to have to stand there upon that grass and be stared at by those two pairs of eyes one behind the other was getting to be something quite too awful! The lawn—in fact the entire place—began to wear to him the aspect of some sort of enormous green trap, a trap with only one means of escape from it, that by which Mr. Griggs had gone.

Under these circumstances his joy may be imagined when he was presently informed that tea was ready, and that he was to go into the house for it. At the first word he turned and fled, followed by the sombre eyes of his great-uncle gazing after him rather piteously from under the big hood of his chair.

Before the meal was finished Mr. Griggs had reappeared upon the scene, and immediately it was over Gilly was desired to go out again—pointedly by himself—in order to take his leave of Lord Rollo. This time the interview

between them was of the briefest, and he came running hastily back again with a pair of very red cheeks. The car was waiting for them at the back door; they got in, and started for home.

“Shedding a tear at parting with your noble and affectionate relative?” Mr. Griggs inquired, after they had gone about half a mile in silence. They were sitting this time not in the front but the back part of the car.

“N—o.” Gilly, as a matter of fact, was enchanted to be off, but since that last brief interview with his great-uncle his emotions had come to be rather enlisted upon the other side. “He was *vevy* kind,” he added in a tone of fervent conviction.

“The strawberries, I suppose, proved that? or was it the cream?” They had just been regaling themselves upon those delicacies.

“Look!” Gilly fumbled for an instant in his pocket, and from amongst a collection of miscellanies presently extracted two shining sovereigns, which he held out rather bashfully upon the palm of his hand.

“Gemini! I apologise to the noble lord! Tips show a tender heart all the world over.”

Gilly put his two shining sovereigns back into his pocket without another word. There did not, in fact, seem to be anything more to be said. Besides, he much preferred listening to the remarks which the machinery was just then making, and watching the man in front of him twiddle round the spokes of his little guiding-wheel. It looked uncommonly like steering, he observed to himself, only better, a lot better and more amusing. Seeing that he had learnt in so short a time to steer, he did not

see in the least why he might not equally rapidly learn to do this also. The "buzz, buzz" of the wheels filled his ears, the "throb, throb," "rattle, rattle, rattle," of the motion drugged his little brain. They seemed to him to be quite different sorts of noises now from what they had been when they were going the other way. A glow had lit up the whole of the western sky behind them, and was shining redly upon all the wet places they raced over, so that they seemed laced with fire, in some places looking almost as if large pools of blood were lying upon the road.

They had arrived close to the Kilmacrenan landing-place, and were coming rather fast down the last steep bit of hill, when the car suddenly slackened, and the chauffeur began hooting loudly. It was quite dusk now, but looking before him along the steep descent, Gilly could see that a man in a frieze coat was walking composedly down the middle of the road, and taking no sort of heed of all their hooting. Mr. Griggs and the motor-man thereupon began to shout at the tops of their voices; he himself joined in with his shrill little pipe, till the empty road and lonely hillsides seemed to be all torn and ringing with the noise. Still the man in front of them took no sort of notice, but continued walking deliberately down the middle of the road almost as if he were in his sleep. It was so steep that as they bore down upon him nearer and nearer it seemed to Gilly that they must be going the next instant to kill him, and he all but clutched at the motor-man's arm to stop him. In fact, although they slowed almost to stopping-point, the car still went steadily on and on, till at last one of the

front knobs actually touched the man in the middle of the back as with a cold, stiff finger. Then, and not till then, he started, and when he saw what it was that had touched him, he started again yet more violently, darting right across the road almost into the ditch, at the same time pointing to his ears to show them that he was deaf. Afterwards, when they had shot on again with a loud, angry buzz towards the landing-place, Gilly looked back and saw the man still standing in the same place beside the ditch, and staring distractedly after them.

CHAPTER XVII

IN WHICH THE PAST AND THE PRESENT HAVE A MOONLIGHT MEETING

YOU'RE walking a lot better, you know, old man!"

Phil and Sir Maurice O'Sullivan were crossing one of the paddocks not far from the latter's house. Sir Maurice had himself only returned the evening before from Newmarket and other kindred resorts.

"With the help of a stick I succeed, as you observe, in surmounting daisies," Phil replied gravely. "A really good-sized buttercup is rather much for me, and before a dandelion I fall prostrate."

"Rubbish! You're both walking better, and moreover you're looking pounds better. I noticed it the minute I got back."

"Oh, if you want to cry up your own locality as a health resort, don't let me baulk you! Common gratitude would prevent my doing that. Shall we call it bracing?"

"No, I suppose Kerry is hardly that. Not that *I* ever notice whether a place is bracing or t'other thing."

"Blessed state of affairs! Stick to that, Maurice, if I may advise you."

"How have you been sleeping?" pursued his host.

"Prime. I can actually count the number of times in which the hag-lady has put saddle and bridle on me. Before I came here she simply pursued me every night—chased me up and down through all the small hours, "as Taurus chaseth Aries."

"As what? Oh, that's poetry, I suppose? Is it Lord Tennyson, may I ask, you're quoting?"

"No, Mr. Longfellow."

"I thought all you extra-superior people had chucked over poor old Longfellow ages ago."

"So we have, but we pick him up, you see, now and then, when we want him."

"I remember learning 'The Schooner Hesperus' off by heart when I was a small shaver, ever so long before I went to Eton," pursued the baronet. "'The skipper hath taken his little daughter to bear him companie,' that's the way it goes. A governess of my sister's taught it to me, and she used to cry buckets-full of tears, I recollect, whenever we came to the end of it."

"Your sister's governess must have been a lady of very good taste. It's a remarkably moving poem."

"I piped, too, I believe, just for sociability. Children are such awfully sentimental little beggars. By the way, talking of children, that nice little chap of the Dunkerron's is over here, I understand, to-day, to look at a pony with his tutor."

"Gilly is? You don't say so? How did you hear that, Maurice?"

"Old Byrne told me half-an-hour ago. It seems that he's been asked to assist in the transaction. The pony

belongs to a farmer up the hills, a pal of his, but the person who has really undertaken the job is that enterprising young woman, Miss Babs Kennedy. The way seems to have been that Lord Rollo has made up his mind to give the boy a pony, and has written to her father about it. Apparently they've none of their own to sell, but this man, Pat Flynn, is a *protégé* of hers. And she'll make them buy his beast, what's more, if she sets her mind on it, of that you may bet your hat! There is not a more unscrupulous horse-coper, male or female, in the whole south of Ireland than Babs Kennedy promises to be."

"But, I say, Maurice, the boy can hardly ride at all ; he has told me so himself several times. You see he's lived nearly all his life in London."

"Babs will make him ride then fast enough, whether he can or can't!" laughed Sir Maurice. "She'll chuck him into the saddle if the bargain depends upon it; trust her for that!"

"Look here ; where do you suppose they are?"

"Off yonder, a couple of fields away. Why, good Lord, Phil, you're never going there?"—for his cousin had turned resolutely in the direction indicated.

"Yes, I am. You can come along, too, if you like, and help to lug me over the buttercups."

"But, I say, Phil, hold hard! Why on earth should you post off like that, and in this sun, too? The boy's got his tutor, I tell you, to look after him."

"Tutor! Nonsense! His tutor knows no more about ponies than you do about *Dinotheriums*. He's a naturalist."

"And ponies have nothing to say to natural history, I suppose?"

"Moreover, he's the most casual sort of a beggar. He'd be looking for beetles in the hedge, and letting the boy break his neck. Anyhow I am going, Maurice, so you may as well come along too, and look after me."

"You're cracked, Phil. You'll make yourself ill. What possible concern is the boy of yours?"

"Well, his own people are away in India, for one thing."

"What, then? Not that I'm denying, mind you, for a moment that his neck is of value. If Miss Babs succeeds in breaking it she'll undoubtedly break something a hundred times more precious than her own. Jerusalem! Only think of the wailing and weeping of the house of Dunkerron!"

"I don't care two straws about the house of Dunkerron, but I'm—I'm really fond of that boy, Maurice."

"My dear chap! Well, I must say he struck me as an uncommonly nice little fellow the night he slept here, and, of course, you've seen a lot more of him than I have. All right, if you must go, you must! I'll come too, and between us we'll see if we can't stop Miss Babs from breaking his neck. Only take your time; there's not the slightest hurry."

They accordingly crossed a couple of paddocks, Phil Acton getting over the ground in a fashion that he would have thought impossible two months earlier. In the middle of the third paddock a group of people were seen standing together, a thinner fringe of lookers-on lining the nearest hedge.

"I can see that cherished infant of yours standing upon the bank over there, so that he's not had his neck broken *yet*," observed Sir Maurice.

"Yes, I see him too." Phil relaxed his pace, and gave a perceptible grunt of relief. "Thank you, Maurice; you're a good man! Go on now, and I'll follow you more slowly."

Catching sight of his friend, Gilly came presently bounding across the field towards him, open-mouthed over the achievements of his latest acquaintance.

"I say, Mr. Phil, she's splendid, she's a stunner, she *weally* is! I didn't know there were such girls! She just hopped on his back, you know, and rode him twice round the field as hard as ever he could go, and she made him jump those furze-bushes over there, too, and on a man's saddle, and *not* strad-legs!"

"Let us at least be thankful for that! And what has Mr. Griggs been doing in the meanwhile?"

"Oh, he's been talking, and been feeling the pony's legs. He says he used to ride a lot when he was in America."

"Lassoed wild horses, I've no doubt, upon the boundless plains, and rode them to a standstill?"

"I don't know exactly, but he's been talking to me about it as we came along."

"They've not put you up yet, have they?"

"No. Miss Babs said that I might, and that it would be all right, and I would have got up, too, only old Byrne wouldn't let me. He said something wasn't right about the pony, I don't know what. *I* think he looks right enough."

"Blessings on old Byrne's head! Look here, young man, you've got to promise me that you won't mount that pony nor any other animal till I give you leave."

"Oh, I say, Mr. Phil, I *can't* do that; they'll think me such an awful Miss Molly."

"Never mind what they think. You promise?"

"Oh, I *can't*, Mr. Phil; I *weakly* *can't*. Whatever would she say?" The boy's face grew quite red over the prospective humiliation.

"Listen to me, Gilly. Do you suppose that I should advise you to show the white feather?—to be a little coward, I mean?"

"N—o, I'm sure you wouldn't, Mr. Phil—only—and she's a girl, too!"

"I never said she was an elephant! Remember your father and mother are in India, so that you can't consult them, at any rate in a hurry. Now if I swear to you that the minute it's commonly safe I'll let you up, will that content you? You don't want to be chucked off in the middle of the field before all these people, surely? You know you can't ride properly yet."

"N—o, but I'm going to."

"Yes, of course you're going to. I'll help you; we'll all help you. I used to ride a bit once upon a time myself, though you mayn't believe it. Sir Maurice, too, will help you. Well, Maurice, what do you report?" for they were now crossing the last paddock, and Sir Maurice had turned back towards them.

"Oh, he's a weedy little brute, and one of his knees looks as if he had been down, though, of course, the man swears he hasn't. No doubt if he was fed up

a bit and worked steadily he'd look a lot better, but he's not fit for the boy to ride as he is. He's been in bad hands, too ; any one can see that."

Gilly's face fell. In fancy he had already seen himself careering round the paddock, and leaping backwards and forwards over the furze-bushes as Miss Babs had done.

That energetic young lady at this moment came swinging across the field towards them, her mane of splendid chestnut-red hair flying down her back, a submissive younger brother at her heels, and a whirl of dogs careering round.

"Pat Flynn says there's n'er another pony to be had, good or bad, in the neighbourhood, Sir Maurice!" she called out in indignant tones long before reaching them. "What'll father say to Lord Rollo, I should just like to know, for I asked him to say we'd found a pony. If we had him in hand for a couple of weeks you'd not know him with the difference."

"Very likely, but he wouldn't be any more fit on that account for the boy. What he wants is to learn to ride, and he'd do that a lot better on something that was older and more trained. You know this, Babs, just as well as I do," Sir Maurice observed placidly.

Miss Babs pouted. "Pat Flynn would let them have him for twenty-five pounds," she said sulkily.

"Or for half the money if he couldn't get more ; I've no doubt at all of that ! Listen, Babs ; I'll undertake to make it square with Lord Rollo. What you and old Byrne have to do between you at present is to teach that boy to ride. That's the main business. We can pick up a pony for him at any time."

But Miss Babs Kennedy, as it happened, occupied the rather unusual position of being the one dominating female in a house full of more or less submissive males. As a consequence even the admitted authority of Sir Maurice O'Sullivan failed to quell her.

"I've been after telling Pat Flynn that the pony will do," she said, tossing back her chestnut mane firmly.

"Very well, then, you'll have now to be after telling him that it won't, or Byrne will have to do it instead of you. Don't be a little goose, Babs; you'll find that it will work out all right. Look here, there's that old grey of yours. Why shouldn't the boy learn to ride on him?"

"What's the sense of that? No one would want to buy the grey. He's twelve years old if he's an hour!"

"All the more suitable for the boy to learn to ride upon. Moreover, if he can't be bought he can be hired. I'll tell Lord Rollo that's what I advise. They don't want a pony, I imagine, for the boy to take to England with him; what they want is a pony that he can ride while he is here. The grey will be worth twice the money to his people, and, moreover, to you also."

Babs still looked contumacious. "Father'll not like it," she said.

"Oh yes, he will. He won't mind doing it anyhow, once in a way to oblige Lord Dunkerron—especially if you tell him," laughed Sir Maurice.

In this fashion, though not until after some further display of wrath on the part of Miss Babs and a consolatory tip to its aggrieved owner, the affair of Pat

Flynn's pony was settled, not a little to Phil Acton's relief. He felt rather ashamed of his own attitude in the matter once the crisis was over, and there was no longer any fear of Gilly's neck being sacrificed to Miss Kennedy's desire for a successful bargain. As Maurice had said, what *could* it concern him? A question to which there was no answer beyond the fact that for some reason or other it *did*.

He took an opportunity of returning to the matter that evening as he and his cousin sat smoking their final pipes in the billiard-room before going to bed.

"You must have thought me a pretty considerable ass this afternoon, Maurice," he remarked, when a silence had lasted between them for two or three minutes.

"I? Not a bit of it, my dear boy; I only thought it uncommonly good of you. I should have been deuced sorry myself if any harm had come to that fine little chap, and in my own fields too."

"One cripple hobbling round them seems to be about enough, certainly for the present."

"You're not going to be a cripple, Phil, so don't you think it! You're getting heaps better every day. You'll be as fit as any one before the year's out, see if you won't!"

"Humph! If I do mend you'll have had a main hand in it, Maurice, that's certain. I'm a fractious beggar, but I realise that."

"Stuff! I don't know how you've stood this place so long. It must be simply deadly for any man who doesn't fish."

"Ah, quite so. What sort of a man, by the way, is this

Kennedy?"— Phil was rather an exceptional young Briton, yet he fled, as will be seen, before the approach of sentiment like any average one.

"Oh, an uncommonly decent sort of fellow, poor devil, only poorer than any rat, and up to his ears too, I'm afraid, in debt. How he lives at all is the marvel. He's a sort of fiftieth cousin of mine, but I see very little of him ; in fact, I've given up asking him to dinner or anything else, for he never comes. His boys, too, are growing up awful young cubs by what I can see. Practically, therefore, Miss Babs is the only member of the family with whom one has any intercourse."

"There's nothing particularly cubby about her."

"No ; and she's got a head on her shoulders too, has Babs. I expect she takes after her mother, who was a northerner, whereas her father is exactly like what all his forebears must have been from time immemorial—the same style, in fact, as my own lot, the O'Sullivans, no doubt were—good sportsmen, you know, and decent fellows enough, I dare say in their way, but desperate slouchers, and the most appallingly unbusiness-like crew ! No doubt, in the quite old days there was a goodish bit of fighting and murdering one another, and those sorts of games always going on, which must have kept them rather more lively, and afterwards — well, there was smuggling and one thing and another, and up to a century ago they were always rebels, of course, every man Jack of them."

"I wish you'd make over some of your smugglers and rebels to me. The respectability of the Actons is enough to crush any man. Look as far back as one can—no

tremendous distance either—one sees rows upon rows of philistine faces grinning at one—no, not even grinning ; smiling smugly."

Sir Maurice did not appear to be listening. He had taken up the tongs, and was carefully lifting two or three bits of live turf which still lingered amongst the feathery-looking ashes in the wide hearth.

"It's a deuced odd thing, Phil, and I've never quite understood it myself, but the only people in this part of the world that I've ever really cottoned to all the years I've been here have been some of the out-and-out poor ones—the old lot, I mean—not, of course, the new, half-baked, Americanised kind. The women specially. I'm not a sentimental chap, as you know, but there's something about some of them—of course not all—that makes one feel, I can't explain what, as if one wanted to be mothered by them ! It's their eyes, I believe—the funny way they have of looking up at you out of them—that and their voices, the odd turns they take, sinking and swelling and going up again, you know. It always gives me quite a different feeling from any other looks or voices I've ever known, though why it does, goodness knows ! I can quite understand those old stories they tell about men getting to care a heap more for their foster-mothers and their foster-mother's families than they did for their own."

Phil Acton listened in silence. The moment was rather a confidential one, and it seemed to him that he was getting to see a side of his cousin that he not only knew nothing about, but that he had never so much as suspected.

"Did I ever tell you about a young woman that I made tremendous friends with here, ages upon ages ago, when I was about your age?" Sir Maurice presently went on: "A namesake of my own she was, and, moreover, the handsomest creature I ever laid eyes on in my life, high or low."¹

"No, never. Tell me all about her now, there's a good man. She was—simply a peasant, you mean?"

"Peasant? Lord, yes!—not that any one ever uses that word over here. She'd never had a shoe or a stocking on her feet in her life, if that's what you call being a peasant?"

"All right, go on. And you fell in—love with her, did you?"

"Upon my oath I don't know. I never have rightly known. No, I'll not tell you to-night, Phil; it's too long a story, and it's high time too you were in your bed. I'll tell you one thing though. Do you remember that dilapidated little cabin you noticed the other day, down by Darragh Point? Well, that was where she was living."

"But it's got no roof to it."

"Nor had it then—or only the fragments of one; that was the way the whole thing came about."

Phil waited expectantly, but it soon became evident that no story was forthcoming that evening. Sir Maurice fidgetted a little longer with the tongs amongst the turf, then suddenly stood up and rang the bell. "Anything to drink, Phil? No? Then, bye-bye," and they parted for the night.

¹ "Namesakes." *Plain Frances Mowbray, and Other Tales.*

As he went up to his room over the heavily carpeted stairs Phil Acton found himself smiling several times, though he was not quite sure what about. The very air of the house, the luxurious feel and look of everything, seemed to add to an impression of incongruity which had somehow sprung upon him unexpectedly. Arrived at his own room, he pushed the sash up as far as it would go and leaned out. The smell of the water-weeds from the lake rose strongly, mixed with a nearer scent of syringa from a bush hard by. The peaks overhead stood out with a sort of muffled clearness, a rising moon not far above them, making them appear a good deal taller somehow than in the daytime.

Leaning his elbows upon the ledge and looking out through the shining dusk, he began trying idly to reconstruct for himself those days that his cousin had been speaking of, as in his own unfathomable ignorance he conceived them to have been ; coaxing the Past, as we all of us do now and then, to deliver its secrets ; to let him peep, no matter how short a way, backwards, do something that would enlarge that hide-bound sense of being for ever and for ever tied to a single, scarce perceptible point, upon a line that is drawn out to all infinity.

What were they really like, those old fighting days of which Maurice had been speaking ? In what fashion did the men and women who lived then, speak, move, think and behave, "weally, weally," as Gilly would say ? Aided by the obviously appropriate setting in which he found himself, he tried strenuously for several minutes to conjure up a likeness of those days ; to evolve some kind

of a passable simulacrum of them out of his own mind. Shutting his eyes tightly, he presently opened them again suddenly and widely. Apparently that form of conjuration was not the right one, for no fresh perception resulted, beyond the rather irrelevant one that the moon was now high enough to peep over into the lake, and that in consequence a crowd of hitherto invisible ripples had sprung into existence, each with a fleck of silver upon its outer rim. Ah, if the right eye, the right mind, could only have been set there where he was to-night, Phil said to himself longingly—the sudden longing of the half-artist, the artist in thought only, for the real artist, the artist, not in thought only, but in truth and absolute reality—then, and not till then, this old forgotten world—and how many another old forgotten world—might hope to spring to life ; might begin to move in its ceremonys ; to wake, stir and thrill, as the lake down below him was at that moment waking and thrilling under those disturbing touches of the moon.

Like every reading man, English no less than Irish, Phil knew something about those bygone O'Sullivans, if only from his Froude. He tried to remember what it was exactly that he did know about them, and to recall some of their names. There was Morty O'Sullivan—runner of blockades, convoyer of Wild Geese, fighter at Fontenoy, at Preston Pans, and elsewhere ; gallant servant of Maria Teresa, and, perhaps, even more gallant rebel of King George. There was his cousin, Silvester O'Sullivan, again — informer, blackguard, betrayer of both sides, renegade, spy. Others, too, no doubt, there were that hovered between those two extremes, though if he

had ever heard their names he had promptly forgotten them again.

He did his best now to think them out one by one, or rather type by type—gallant O'Sullivans, blackguard O'Sullivans, smuggling O'Sullivans, duelling O'Sullivans, dare-devil O'Sullivans of every variation of dare-devilry. Then his thoughts began to wander away along another though a kindred track of association. What an odd little half revelation that was of Maurice's about his barefooted heroine. Yes, and by Jove! what a still odder, what an utterly unaccountable notion that was of his about foster-mothers, Phil reflected, his thoughts travelling backwards over the talk beside the smoking-room fire. Foster-mothers! The very word seemed redolent of everything that was incredibly archaic and out of date. Who ever heard of a man possessing a foster-mother, let alone of his preferring her to his own mother? With a further, and this time perhaps more successful, attempt at realisation, he next tried to picture what it would be like to have been nursed and bred up in the dusky corner of some friendly cabin; to have opened eyes for the first time upon such a scene, and upon the doubtless adoring face of its owner leaning over you. It would really be uncommonly like finding oneself moving about in the inside of some Dutch or early German paintings—a Memling, say, or Van Eyck—he said to himself. And then he began to laugh out loud in the moonlight at the utterly incongruous notion of connecting such a scene, such sentiments, above all such an infancy with his eminently up-to-date club-frequenting, frock-coated cousin, Maurice O'Sullivan. By what possible ingenuity could there be any connection between the two?

or how could ideas derived from so wildly incongruous a condition of affairs possibly survive in any man's mind up to the present date? "After all though, you never can tell!" he added a minute later in words recently become familiar. With which summary of the situation he at last went to bed.

CHAPTER XVIII

DESCRIBES THE FAMILY OF KENNEDY, ALSO SOME VARIATIONS OF HORSEMANSHIP

AS a result of Sir Maurice's diplomacy, it came to be a settled thing that Gilly was to go over to Mr. Kennedy's house several times a week, there to acquire the art of horsemanship at the hands of the accomplished Miss Babs. That vigorous young lady had accepted the rebuff to her horse-coping with a philosophy which spoke well for her sense, and further was prepared to bestow an amount of care upon our hero's equestrian education which she would certainly never have deigned to give to that of a younger brother.

Apparently Mr. Finigan's commendations were not without foundation, for Gilly picked up his new art with a fair degree of speed. His teacher's methods, if summary, were eminently efficacious. Whatever qualms of dismay may have shot through his soul the first time that Miss Babs, with a smack of her palm upon the grey's quarters, sent him flying down the field by himself, he managed to conceal it, and to return to his instructress smiling. That the best way to feel brave is to look brave was a bit of psychology doubtless beyond him, but pride may in such cases do as well, and Gilly was not after all the last scion of a more or less dominating house for nothing.

The grey was a kindly, well-seasoned old beast, "clever

as a cat," well accustomed to inexpert hands, and under its guidance he learnt to ride with and without his stirrups, to sit a bar, to negotiate a furze-bank, and so by degrees to graduate to the satisfaction of his mistress. At last "a morning rose in memorable pomp," upon which he succeeded in sticking on while the grey took him triumphantly across the "ha-ha" separating Sir Maurice's grounds from those lamentably thistle-blown pastures that formed the outlying portion of Mr. Kennedy's territory.

Naturally these evolutions brought him into a considerable amount of intimacy with the various members of the Kennedy family, from "The Pinkeen," an audacious infant of six, and the only person who ventured to oppose his all-powerful sister, up to—perhaps one ought rather to say down to—its pathetically self-effacing and despondent head.

The tragedy of the well-meaning man who has made a hopeless mess of his life has been often celebrated, and Mr. Eustace Kennedy was an admirable specimen of that particular form of tragedy. As usually happens, this was to a considerable degree the victim's own fault, but it was far from being entirely so. Evil days have at various times visited many classes of men in Ireland, but upon no class have they of late fallen more heavily—some critics would add more deservedly—than upon its land agents. Mr. Kennedy's father had been an agent before him, and in his day large as well as small fish had passed through the official net, not without comfortable results in the matter of percentages. Long before the latest *débâcle* these had, however, wholly slipped away from the unretentive grasp of the son; and how he struggled on from day to day, and in what fashion he proposed, amongst other

details, to provide for his seven sons, was, as Sir Maurice had said, a source of unfailing speculation to his neighbours and acquaintances.

That Babs Kennedy was not only mistress of the house and its ruler, but further its capitalist, it was hardly possible to know the family five minutes without discovering. A sister of her mother's had died and left a modest sum in the funds strictly tied up for her benefit, the interest of which was in the meanwhile to be expended upon her education. This interest had devolved into Mr. Kennedy's hands, and by a sufficiently obvious process into Babs' own. For two and a half years she allowed it, or a portion of it, to be spent in return for such smatterings of knowledge as she may have picked up at a boarding-school. After that she struck. Her education, she said, was her own affair, and she intended to learn useful things and not useless ones. Considering that the useless ones in question included nearly every branch of ordinary information, and quite every ladylike accomplishment, it will be seen that Babs had at least the courage of her opinions. She was no fool though, nor even without ambition in her own way. To take only one detail, but a significant one—her clothes ! No one could accuse Babs Kennedy either of untidiness or tawdriness. She had early grasped the essential fact that loss of personal dignity lay that way. Neither the tailor at Kenmare nor the tailor at Cahirsiveen—she had never been able to carry her investigations further—were presumably finished artists, yet Babs had managed to extract out of one or other of them quite serviceable tweed suits, and even—a truly miraculous feat—an up-to-date serge habit, made upon the model of one lent during

the summer season by a confiding school-fellow, a damsel whose own home was in the County Meath.

To Gilly—whose feminine world had of late been narrowed down to Mrs. Brown and Hemma—Miss Babs was of the nature of a revelation. Her vigour and her competency were alike astonishing. With a father and seven brothers—two older and five younger than herself—she was unmistakably the man of the party, if energy and self-assertion are the tests of manhood. She could ride, run, fish, sail a boat, and swim, moreover, against any one of them ; do everything, in short, in the way of masculine accomplishment except shoot. There Mr. Kennedy, although a meek and long-suffering father, had, so far at all events, contrived to assert himself.

Despite the energy with which she ran it, the house must be admitted to have presented a deplorably out-of-elbows aspect, the region in which the boys lived causing Gilly's eyes to open widely the first time he was brought into it in order to change his shoes. With the adaptability of his age he speedily, however, grew, not merely reconciled to it, but active in assisting "the Snipe" and "Puldoon"—the two of the tribe who came nearest to him in age—in various carefully organised bear-fights, with the result of further breaking up its already ramshackle and enfeebled furniture.

Generally it was under Mr. Moriarty's wing, or attended by Tim, that he made his way to The Warren, Mr. Kennedy's appropriately named residence. Now and then Mr. Griggs would tear himself away from his hydroïdæ and radiolarians in order to accompany his charge. That pillar of science made himself much

more agreeable, by the way, under this comparatively lowly roof than he had deigned to do under that of Lord Rollo. The disorder, not to say squalor, prevailing under it he accepted with a serenity which Gilly—used to Mrs. Brown's austerity in such matters—felt privately not a little relieved by. An audience was with Mr. Griggs the first of desideratums, and he was able here to enlarge upon his Indianapolis and other experiences with an eloquence and authority which held the entire family, including even the critical Babs, silent in admiring awe. Out-of-doors, however, and away from the torrent of unknown and crushingly erudite words, her native sense of superiority speedily reasserted itself.

"And did all of them out there in that place you were telling us about ride with their toes so, and their reins up so?" she inquired in a tone of friendly interest when, mounted upon a hireling which he had discovered in the neighbourhood, Mr. Griggs appeared unexpectedly one day in the field in which she was exercising her pupil.

The inquiry failing to elicit any direct reply, Babs, her hunting-crop in hand, next made a leisurely circuit of the hireling and its rider, her blue Tam-o'-Shanter far back upon her burnished locks, her straight, still rather boyish figure showing well in its tweed skirt and short Eton jacket.

"'Twas out of Aloisius Muldooney's field *that* mare came, I'll bet a penny," she remarked confidently.

"And I guess you'd win your money, young lady," Mr. Griggs this time replied, with an appreciative nod.

Miss Kennedy continued to circle around the hireling

and its rider, an expression of distinctly pitying tolerance animating her features.

"Ah, ride her on the snaffle, man dear!" she suddenly exclaimed as Mr. Griggs began encouraging his mount to curvet. "'Tisn't running away with you she's wanting any way!"

Instinctively the tutor's hands shifted. The taunt carried a smart, despite his own obvious lack of responsibility for such despicable tameness.

"Muldooney tells me he hires her out for hunting in the winter," he observed in an airy tone.

"Aw the liar!"—Miss Babs' diction, especially where matters horsy were concerned, was as unchastened, it will be seen, as it was deliberately redolent of the soil. "'Tis little hunting any one gets hereabouts," she went on in an explanatory tone, "and the little there is is like climbing chimneys. As for that one, 'tis down on her poor knees in the first hollow place she'd be kneeling, saying her prayers and going to sleep like any old wether!"

At this picture of Mr. Griggs' probable hunting experiences "Puldoon" and "the Snipe" broke into unseasonable laughter, a demonstration which provoked that gentleman into making an even rasher assertion.

"I'm told she's a good fencer," he said, shortening his reins, and looking round him with an air of competent horsemanship.

"Did Aloisius tell you that?"—Babs' tone displayed an admiring interest. "Well the—— but after all he knew you were an Englishman! Run, Puldoon dear, and put up the bar." Then as her brother scuttled

obediently away, " Maybe 'tis the 'ha-ha' or the double you'd rather try her first at?" she continued in a tone of friendly hospitality.

Seeing that the "double"—a rickety turf bank, with a considerable amount of uninvitingly brown water in its ditches—was the biggest of the "impidiments" upon this particular schooling ground; that the "ha-ha" also had unpleasant possibilities, Mr. Griggs, as the best of the evils presented to him, moved with an air of indifference towards the bar, the rest of the party, including Gilly upon the grey pony, following or preceding him.

They found the obliging Puldoon engaged in sticking its pegs into the two topmost holes, a height which would have brought the bar up to some five feet or more from the ground.

"Quit that!" his sister called to him in her most imperious tones. "Set it back to number three, with your impudence, you young schemer! 'Tis Gilly the lord that'll be taking it first. When he's done his little leps you can put it up afterwards as high as the gentleman wishes."

"Gilly the lord"—a compromise between ease and formality invented by "Puldoon" himself—sat ready and eager upon his grey. The bar, as now lowered, stood a little under four feet above the ground, and he had already gone higher than that. Babs threw a critical eye upon her pupil's deportment; desired him to sit back a trifle, and to stiffen himself into himself; then led the grey to the starting-place, and sent it forward with a flick of her hunting-crop.

For Gilly there was nothing to do but hold up his

head and sit tight, the grey having about as much idea of refusing what lay before it as any circus pony. Over they went, the wind lifting the boy's brown hair, the pride of his small achievement filling his soul to overflowing. It was like a bit of that dream upon the way to the Rocking-Stone come true. To acquit himself with distinction before his formidable tutor meant more to him at this particular juncture of his career than any other possible form of success or distinction that could have been attained.

"Hurroo! More power to Gilly the lord!" shouted the friendly Puldoon. "Now, sir, will I raise it to the top for you?"

Top or bottom, it very soon became evident, was all the same as far as Mr. Griggs' new mount was concerned. With a resolution which spoke well for his nerves, that gentleman sent her full tilt at the bar, his toes far out, his face set and rather red. Whatever she might have done under less atrociously artificial circumstances, no sooner had the Kilmacrenan hireling perceived herself to be rapidly approaching an offensive, and entirely uncalled-for barrier of wood, than with a swift and intelligent change of front she brought herself first sideways to it, then, as her rider tried to keep her straight, with another rapid twist, which he found himself powerless to prevent, turned completely round and began backing, evidently with the intention of bringing the weight of her hind-quarters to bear upon the nearest post.

"Aw the slut!" Alas for those two and a half years at a superior boarding-school when Babs Kennedy grew really excited! "Pick up that strap on the ground,

Puldoon, and lay into her with it, smart! I'll bring her round at it again. Loose hold of her mouth a little, Mr. Griggs, if you please, or between us we'll be apt to have the head of her pulled off."

A more trying performance for a not particularly experienced rider it would be difficult to conceive. For six or eight minutes longer Mr. Griggs stoically endured under the mingled attentions of "Puldoon" with the strap in his rear, Babs with her hunting-crop in front, and the jerks and plunges, first to one side and then to the other, of his clumsy and outraged hireling. Then he struck.

"Guess I'll let you finish her education for yourself, young lady! I shouldn't like to hinder you if you're pining for a nice quiet ride! I've seen you upon a man's saddle, you know, before now"—and he prepared to dismount.

But at this proposal Babs indignantly shook her locks.

"Aw, not at all; not at all! Sit tight with you, man, sit tight! 'Twasn't me ever said she could lep!" she exclaimed with more justice than grammatical accuracy.

At this moment a diversion was effected by the appearance of Mr. Kennedy, who was observed crossing a corner of the nearest field with that peculiarly mooning and despondent aspect which was characteristic of him. Perceiving the group gathered about the leaping bar he turned and sauntered towards it, pausing now and then to make an ineffectual dab with his spud at one or other of the many flaunting thistles with which the field was empurpled.

"Good afternoon to you, Mr. Griggs, and good afternoon to you too, me little Lord Shannagh! A wonderful

fine day and no signs of any change either at the present time. Well, Babs, me child, and what in the name of reason are you at now?" For, undisturbed by his arrival, Miss Babs was still steadily trying to urge the reluctant hireling along the path of duty.

A chorus of explanations arose, under cover of which Mr. Griggs quietly dismounted, and stood mopping his brows.

"Think of Aloisius Muldooney having the impudence to tell him she could fence!"—Babs' voice rose dominantly above her brother's—"Aw, father, will you only just look at her!"

Mr. Kennedy did look. After her recent experiences the hireling certainly presented a far from adventurous appearance, and suggested the shafts of a car very much more vividly than steeplechasing.

"She's no great shakes, that's the truth ; but after all what would you expect ; and Aloisius Muldooney is a very poor man," was Mr. Kennedy's tolerant comment. "I'm sorry that I've nothing of me own to offer you at present, Mr. Griggs," he continued courteously to that gentleman. "Unfortunately me stable has never been so low in the world, I'm sorry to say, as it is just now. To be sure there's Sir Maurice O'Sullivan's one hard by, and three times more horses in it than ever he can use, and the best natured, most obliging man too in the whole world. Not that I ever make any great use myself of his horses, or of aught else belonging to him for that matter, but me daughter here, Miss Babs, is less particular. Eh, child?"

Babs Kennedy's face flushed suddenly red. She had now left off tugging at the hireling, and that quadruped,

restrained only by Poldoon, was sensibly solacing itself after its late misusage by a few mouthfuls of grass from a neighbouring hillock.

“I’d rather have one horse that was me very own than I’d have a hundred thousand that was only lent me!” the daughter of the house of Kennedy announced in her most uncompromising tones.

“Well, I can’t blame you there, child; so indeed for that matter would most people,” her father responded placidly. “After all, though, what’s the good of talking? Times are bad, and not likely to mend either, as far as I can discover, and ‘tis as well therefore to have an obliging neighbour. By the same token, isn’t that the sick young gentleman—Sir Maurice’s English friend or cousin, I forget his name—that I see coming into the field there, hard by the gap yonder? ‘Tis him sure enough. Only look how the little lord has spotted him! See the pace he’s getting out of that old grey! I declare to God ‘tis a pity to see a fine handsome well-grown young fellow like that so reduced with ill-health—Babs, me child, are you aware that the widow O’Callaghan has been sitting these three-quarters of an hour or more upon the steps at the back-door, waiting to know how many of her young pullets it is we’ll be wanting. Run away to her quick with you, child dear, and don’t be keeping her sitting there all day long in the cold, the decent woman.”

“Aw, let her wait! ‘Tisn’t any great harm it will be doing her this fine day!” Miss Babs replied rather mutinously. After a few more minutes, however, she did depart, going off with long boy-like strides across the grass to attend to her domestic duties.

CHAPTER XIX

IS DEVOTED TO PROVING HOW A HERO MAY IMPROVE IN SOCIABILITY, AND HOW LITTLE A DAUGHTER MAY RESEMBLE HER FATHER

PERHAPS the most important result of that introduction to natural science which Mr. Griggs was supposed to bring with him to Inishbeg lay in the fact that this distinguished investigator was himself far too whole-heartedly absorbed in its intricacies to have time to bestow more than a distant, and so to speak official, eye upon the incomings and outgoings of the small personage confided to him.

The result of this far from unendurable form of neglect was that Gilly's wanderings over the Kilmacrenan hillsides grew daily more independent, and less embarrassed by any shade of supervision. Mrs. Brown had long ceased to do more than mutter, and look unutterable things from the background. Mr. Moriarty's responsibilities too had come to an end from the day that the masterful tutor laid his hands upon the reins, and unless the boy himself summoned Tim, or unless it occurred to Mr. Griggs that it might be as well to have some notion as to the scope and direction of his pupil's wanderings, Finn and he were free, within certain specified hours, to wander at will when, where, in what fashion, and with what company they chose.

No arrangement could have been more completely to

the taste of both. Spurred by a new sense of manly independence, sometimes, too—when his own private supplies were forgotten—by the healthy stimulus of hunger, Gilly's shyness began to wear away, at any rate so far as his humbler neighbours were concerned. A vein of genuine sociability ran on one side in his blood, and he had not been enough with his mother or his mother's kindred for any taint of exclusiveness to have as yet crept in and spoilt it. The result was that most of the scattered homesteads which lay along the scene of their rambles became at one time or other a refuge, and a more or less familiar haunt to both boy and dog. A knock at the door; a hesitating “Good day. If you please may I come in?” on one side, a hearty “Come in out of it then quickly, child!” or a “Welcome kindly” on the other, and he and Finn were free of the hearth, and might dry their moist backs, or air their chilly toes at it, as if to the manner born.

Sometimes the particular cabin thus invaded was found to be already inconveniently full of company. Girls with shawls over their wildly tousled hair; a red-shanked lad or two; an old woman perhaps, mounching and mounching in a dusky corner; possibly even the local idiot, or some red-eyed, predatory-looking stranger from God knows where. Whenever this proved to be the case Gilly and Finn were apt to beat a hasty retreat, or to retire modestly to the threshold till the rain was over. Oftener there would be only the good woman of the house, and perhaps her husband, or a daughter or two, with whom the boy would exchange his roll of white bread and stick of chocolate against a hunch of griddle and a sup of milk, balancing the while, with his knees and chin close together, upon a creepy stool, and enjoying himself hugely in such congenial society.

He was, however, a creature of moods, as his father, and as his grandmother had been before him, and there were days when he shrank, he could not have told why, from every form of sociability ; days when, even in the worst rain, he preferred to crouch below a dripping rock, or to shelter himself under the very raggedest of thorn-bushes. In this way, and in his own unpremeditated little fashion, he grew to be free too of the country-side ; getting to know it bit by bit, as perhaps only a poet or a solitary child ever does know a region in all its moods and tenses. The sun shooting suddenly from under a blue-black cloud-rack, or spreading with an air of conscious benevolence over a desolate world of purple-peaked headlands and curving lanes of water ; the dramatic alternations of weather—nowhere in the world swifter, more bewilderingly dramatic than in Kerry—the furious oncoming of a storm ; the look of penitence and regret worn by sea and sky when their fury was overpast—these, and ten thousand other variations came to write themselves down in some corner or other of his mental palimpsest with a sharpness that neither distance, sophistication, or any of the other changes and chances of life were likely ever entirely to wipe out again.

The Kilmacrenan Rocking-Stone was, of course, under this new order of things visited again and again, and if the experience of one memorable afternoon never exactly repeated itself, others followed hardly less agreeable. To clamber to the top of it ; to stand there and then to “think of nothing,” became one of Gilly’s more chosen recreations. What one thinks of when one thinks of nothing he would have found it difficult to say, but

there was a gay and giddy topsyturvyness about the process which rarely failed to please.

It was the Rocking-Stone, too, which brought him into much the warmest of the various friendships which grew out of these Kilmacrenan wanderings. A notorious old vagabond, called Lanty Kelly, owned that small thatched cabin which found shelter under its toppling mass. This Lanty Kelly had tasted jail more than once for minor offences, and not many years before had been badly wanted it was reported by the police for at least one offence that we are not in the habit of calling a minor one. He did not even enjoy that generous popularity which in Ireland is almost always at the beck of such victims of an alien legislation ; his occasional fits of drunken fury, his habitual sullen unsociability being too well known for even the nimbus of agrarian martyrdom to be able to reconcile his neighbours either to him or them.

By one of those anomalies of which nature seems fond, and which must be a sad trial to evolutionists, this hardened old reprobate was the father of admittedly the best and prettiest pearl of maidenhood to be found at that moment in the whole of this north-eastern corner of Kenmare Bay. Bridget, or Bride Kelly, possessed one of those faces which suggest, even to an unimaginative looker-on, some connection between them and the clouds overshadowing, the waters rippling by, the lights playing an interminable game of bo-peep around them. It was her eyes that were responsible presumably for this impression, but the rest of the face was in this case not unworthy of the eyes, a by no means invariable conjunction of good fortune, in Ireland or elsewhere.

A sudden storm of rain had, as usual, driven the boy across this particular threshold, but once over it, it needed no second storm to bring him back to it again and again. Bride Kelly proved to be the possessor of a store of tales which a young gentleman, who was an acknowledged glutton in such matters, could have listened to all day long had time served. These she would relate to him in a soft, monotonous, sing-song voice, which now and then rose into more æolian intonations, as though filled out and carried to the ear by the wind. She spoke no Irish, the young of the generation to which she belonged having for the most part ceased to do so, and the newer wave from afar not having as yet beaten upon that exceptionally remote corner of the world. All her inflections and turns of speech were drawn, however, from the forgotten tongue, as is the case with thousands to whom Gaelic itself is as unfamiliar a language as Spanish or Chinese.

Another charm for Gilly about his new friend and her cabin was their solitariness. Few visitors ever climbed that precipitous bit of hillside, so that the indiscriminate human huddle about the hearth, which elsewhere often made him uncomfortable, never had to be encountered here. Even if the old vagrant, Lanty, chanced to be at home, he was certain to be sleeping off the effect of some midnight prowl or other misdoing in the inner room, through the walls of which hog-like grunts and snores would occasionally emerge, much to the annoyance of Finn, who never failed to start up, and send back a growling and indignant response to them.

Bride and Babs Kennedy! As a mere study of the comparative feminine, such a pair of intimates ought, one

feels, to have an illuminating effect upon any budding masculine intelligence! Accustomed as this generation has grown to the widest diversities of young womanhood, so dramatic a contrast is not often even now to be met with. To Gilly comparisons of this sort were, of course, foreign. His whole-hearted admiration had gone out at first sight to Mr. Kennedy's capable daughter, but perhaps in the watches of the night, or in some half-conscious moment when he sleepily surveyed the day's doings, it was the sound of a crooning voice, with notes in it like a breeze amongst leaves, a pair of luminous grey eyes shining kindly upon him from a dusky corner, which were apt to revisit him oftenest, and to linger the longest, with a vividness which no perception of social differences, no small fastidiousness, or "little-gentleman" notions, were strong enough luckily to interfere with.

As it happened he had been rather stinted as regards this, the softer side of womanhood. Of its graces and beauty he had even from a baby known a good deal, but of this side—save as embodied by the excellent Mrs. Brown—practically little or nothing. To come within the radius of young Lady Dunkerron's personality was to acquire a good many notions, but certainly not this one. In his own highly unclassified infant dictionary the word "mummy" had always stood for something that shone and glittered; for something white, and pink, and beautiful, and wonderful, but also for something that was just a little unapproachable. To watch in silent absorption while the mysteries of the toilet got themselves accomplished, had always been one of the special entertainments of his day at Brook Street. Earlier too there had usually been a rapid

visit to another and an even more fascinating mummy ; a mummy who sat up in bed clad in a froth of unutterable whiteness ; a mummy who was compassed about with a breakfast-tray whereon coffee and eggs were all but lost under fruit and flowers, and upon one corner of which an ever-mounting pile of notes had a habit of accumulating, in and through which the white, ringed fingers would race and tear with a rapidity which held his mind and eyes alike captive. Afterwards, when the tray was gone, and the notes read, his own turn would come. There would be a swift asking of questions, an examination of his teeth and finger-tips. Kisses—quick, quick, quick, as if from a bird's beak—would be showered upon his face. Sometimes there would be a delicious two or three minutes during which his head would lie, as a bird might lie, in a nest of soft frothiness. All too soon, however—often it seemed to him before the visit had fairly begun—it would be already over, and he would find himself trudging reluctantly upstairs again to the wholly stale and unstimulating society of Mrs. Brown and Hemma.

How it would have been with him had he gone with fader and mummy to India was a question which he had naturally often asked himself. India was a tremenjously hot place, and people, he understood, lived there largely in white clothes, frothy or otherwise. Momentary visions of those morning visits in Brook Street, prolonged *ad infinitum*, had now and again darted across his mind, especially during his earlier and more lonely hours at Inishbeg. They were too dim and unformulated, however, to count for very much. Moreover, he had a shrewd suspicion that even in India, and in the hottest weather, mummy

would have far too much to do to let him sit beside her and to tell him stories for more than the briefest possible period.

In order to discover people who really *did* let you spend a good time sitting comfortably beside them it seemed to be necessary—so Gilly's experience indicated—that they should be either inconveniently ill, or else very poor—“weally, weally poor”—poor enough not to be sure of having always quite sufficient to eat, of having a whole roof over their heads, money enough to buy new clothes, or shoes and stockings to put upon their feet. Supposing, just *supposing*, that fader and mummy, himself and Jan had to live in a quite tiny house, without Mrs. Brown or Hemma, or the cook, or Willum, or any of those sorts of people to wait upon them! A far from displeasing picture of such a condition of destitution used now and then to visit his mind as he sat hunched up in a meditative attitude upon the doorstep of Bride Kelly's cabin, under the overtoppling shadow of the Rocking-Stone. He provided Mr. Phil liberally with another and similar residence hard by, and further made arrangements for a succession of visits from “Puldoon” and “the Snipe,” from Babs, Tim, and Mr. Moriarty, but for none from Mr. Griggs, who would prefer, he felt quite certain, to disappear, in company with Mrs. Brown and the other signs and symbols of a really rather tiresome and uncalled-for prosperity.

That such a re-arrangement of circumstances was not what grown-up people are in the habit of calling “practical”; was, in fact, as he admitted frankly to himself, “dweadful wot,” Gilly in his heart of hearts was per-

fectly aware. Moreover, he was far from invariably desiring so arcadian a condition of affairs—say in exceptionally bad weather! Nevertheless the picture had a fashion of floating up again and again before him, as such pictures will float up before brains that are of the picture-making kind. If Bride Kelly were married and had a son of her own she would have to keep him almost always beside her, he reflected, at all events as long as he was small. She would have to wash, and dress, and feed him all herself, and—in order to keep him quiet—would have probably to sing to him, or to tell him stories from morning till night. Then as he got bigger he in his turn would naturally do all manner of jobs for her; fetch in her firewood, carry pails of water, and do heaps of other things, rough and difficult ones like enough, but better, surely, any day in the week, than beastly Latin and long division sums!

A vignette of himself carrying in wood for fader and mummy, and chopping it vigorously up for them with his own private axe, was apt to stand out in the forefront of these day-dreams. The door of the house they lived in would, of course, be always open, as this one of Bride's was, so that a person living inside it could slip in and out at any hour of the day or night he liked, and that birds or passing friends could come in without the slightest difficulty. Mummy should have a chair, a real one with arms, and should sit in it all day long doing her needle-work, but there should be no pile of notes always waiting to be answered, and, above all, there should be no "company." As regards fader, suitable occupations were perhaps a little more difficult to provide for him, but he

would be sure to go out shooting and fishing a good deal, and bring home whatever he shot or caught for their dinner. In any case he would certainly never be able to sit buried up to the ears in horrid blue-looking papers, so that a person who happened to peep in at the door could never get a chance of talking to him!

In what way horses were going to play a part in this particular programme Gilly was not yet clear, but horses, somehow or other, he felt sure there would have to be. In all probability he would himself get an engagement as jockey, and in that case would win lots of steeple-chases, and would bring back all the gold cups and money he made by them to fader and mummy. Then the shadows would begin to slope more and more to the eastward, and the accomplished steeplechaser and family bread-winner would have to scramble to his feet; say a hasty good-bye to Bride; call to Finn; and the boy and dog would set off, leaping and sliding down the hillside, back to the complexities of civilisation, and the rather scathing comments of Mr. Griggs.

CHAPTER XX

IN WHICH AN ARGUMENT OCCURS UPON THE PRECISE USE OF THE WORD "ROTTEN," FOLLOWED BY A HOMILY UPON THE UNDESIRABILITY OF "BOTTLING."

THOSE comments certainly did not tend to grow gentler and more mellifluous as time went on; on the contrary, they seemed to Gilly to grow harsher, more grating, and more contemptuous-sounding with every week. Whether on account of his own inability to pay proper attention, or because of the inconvenience of having to break off highly critical microscopic investigations in order to set sums for a small boy with no turn for arithmetic, certain it is that the morning lessons at Inishbeg were far from a success, and were apt to end in a condition of visible storm, which sent the tutor in one direction, the pupil in another, as far apart as the limits of their island would admit of.

No namby-pamby notions with regard to softening and smoothing the stubbly road to knowledge had ever visited Mr. Griggs' mind. It had been a prickly and a pebbly path to himself, and it ought, in his opinion, to be a prickly and a pebbly path to everybody else. It was one of many points upon which he and Phil Acton joined issue in hot and absolute disagreement—

"You have had the luck to get hold of a rather

exceptional little bit of human organism, and you promptly set to work with all your might and main to force it into the same iron-ribbed old groove that has already had the spoiling of thousands; to make it, in other words, assimilate precisely the same number of pounds of solid pabulum that you would supply to every tough-stomached, bullet-headed young Briton, and then you wonder that the result is not satisfactory! Excuse my remarking, my dear Griggs, that for a man who sets up to be a student of comparative physiology your methods seem to me to be as obsolete as they are irrational."

"Comparative fitz-foozledom!" the rasping accents came hurtling back. "There you are, off again on one of your finikin, fine-ladyish notions, that unspeakable fallacy of yours as to there being such a thing in the earthly world as human delf and human porcelain! This poor old plan-*et* is quite doodling and doting enough as it is, but it would be ten thousand times worse if you and your sort ever got the ordering of it—See there! Fooling and picking about at the plain pudding of human nature with one of your spick-and-span, apostle-headed, silver-gilt teaspoons! A boy, let me tell you, sir, is a boy in exactly the same sense in which a cat is a cat, or a bull is a bull. And if it hadn't been that it was part of the bargain—the marquis, y' understand, barring corporal punishment—I'd have made that sweet, pretty pet of yours hop handsomely time and again! That's what he wants, and every boy wants, 'specially a dreamy-witted little beggar like that, with his head so high in the air that half the time he doesn't know whether it's a grammar or the multiplication table that has been put into his fingers!"

"You've made him hop often enough, if hopping is all he needs!" Phil Acton retorted. "When I came to Inishbeg this afternoon, he was as jumpy and as nervous as ever he could be!—like a hare that smells greyhounds. Even now he's not enjoying himself as he ought to do. Look at him!"

They were sitting upon a ledge of rock about a mile and a half west of the Inishbeg Sound. Phil had offered the loan of his boat—Sir Maurice's rather—for a dredging expedition, the island ones being for some reason unavailable. After what seemed to him an interminable period of crawling along at the rate of quarter of a knot an hour, in consideration for the dredge, which must on no account be hurried, he had grown tired of the entertainment, and had proposed that he and Gilly should be set ashore at the nearest point. To this Mr. Griggs had consented, but had also himself disembarked, with all his pots and pails, in order to sort them over, and extract the small residuum of value out of the mass of remaining worthlessness. The space immediately below the two men was filled, in consequence, with a distracted crowd of shrimps, broad-claw crabs, and starfishes, scuttling over the unfriendly dryness, in the hope of sooner or later attaining a sea not far off, but for legs of their type sadly unattainable. In spite of this attractive spectacle, Gilly had preferred to linger beside the boat with Tom Devitt, and it was from under the shelter of that friendly giant that he occasionally shot towards the other two those disquieted glances which had occasioned Phil Acton's remark.

"Stuff! I've not made him hop, or not half enough, anyway. He ought to be kept upon the run from morn-

ing till night. They'll never make a man of him otherwise —earl or no earl!"

Phil frowned. "Do, for heaven's sake, leave the unfortunate boy's title out of your argument," he said irritably; "can't you see that it has no more to say to it than the colour of his hair!"

"Oh, it hasn't, hasn't it? Oh no, not at all! No consequence whatsoever, I suppose! Quite the contrary, in fact!" Mr. Griggs cackled ironically.

"Well, it hasn't! You don't imagine that a boy gets let off anything at school, or has a better time there on account of such rubbish?" Phil's tone was ruffled, even a trifle supercilious.

"Not perhaps at one of your high-cockylorum House of Lords of a public school, where every second stiff-collared pup, for aught I know to the contrary, may be a duke or a marquis in his own right. But it does the minute he leaves it, as you know as well as I do—better!"

"I swear to you I don't! Of course there are cads everywhere, but—" Phil stopped. The argument was getting into one of those noxious grooves in which discussion, especially between two men of unavoidably different standpoints, is bound sooner or later to degenerate into a mere wrangle. Instead, therefore, of finishing his sentence, he busied himself in pulling the rug he was lying on up, so as to make a better angle for his elbow. When he began again, it was in a less combative tone.

"It's a mere question, of course, of atmosphere. This country—England I mean—has always been ridiculously behind-hand in such a matter. Why, in France you might

know a man for a month, and never suspect that he had a title."

Griggs screwed his face into a twist of incredulity.

"Guess he wouldn't preserve his interesting *incog-nito* so long as that in Leeds!" he retorted.

"It is so, I assure you. I forget whether you have ever been there?"

"Been where? In France? no, sir, I have *not*. Never been in Eu—rope at all so far; nor yet in India, in South Africa, Madagascar, Nova Scotia, Terra-del-Fuego, and a few dozen other unimportant little places! England, the States, and this rotten little island we're at this moment sitting upon. That's as far as I've got up to the present time."

"What on earth do you call Ireland rotten for?" Phil inquired, not sorry to get upon a topic which could hardly, for either of them, have any personal bearing.

"Why do I call it rotten?"—Mr. Griggs was off again like a runaway engine upon a fresh track—"I call it rotten, sir, because it *is* rotten! When I see a place without the most elementary sign or appearance of life; with no stir or go of any kind; no fresh blood; no *i—deas*; no trade or resources—'cept a few wretched pigs perhaps and bullocks—no push, no enterprise, and what's more, no desire for any of these things, then if the word 'rotten' doesn't suit that place, all I can say is I'm very imperfectly acquainted with the resources of the English language."

As a climax this did not perhaps strike Phil as so absolutely convincing as it was evidently intended to be. But he let that pass.

"I fail to observe anything particularly rotten about this sort of thing," he said, turning his head seaward,

and waving his hand comprehensively over the white-capped highway at their feet, over the long fine line of the mountains opposite, and then up at the pale blue bow over-arching both.

“Oh, if a parcel of dripping rocks and salt water is all you’re looking for, I reckon that you can find that in most places,” retorted the entirely unimpressed Griggs. “When *I* talk of a country I mean the people of that country, not its sea-weeds, and its peat-stacks, and its furze-bushes! If a man is fool enough to listen to those darned newspapers—the *Times*, I mean, and such truck—he’d believe that it was only the uneducated peasantry of this country—the pro-letariat—that were sunk into such a condition of sloth and inertia. But when he comes over for himself and examines into the matter with an *im*-partial and an unembarrassed mind, he pretty soon learns the contrary! Why, now, look at that unfortunate man Kennedy! Can there—I ask you as a candid observer—can there be a more deplorable or more degrading spectacle?”

“Do you know he strikes me as rather an exceptionally decent sort of a man! Poor of course, wretchedly poor if you like, but what then? After all, my dear Griggs, neither you nor I are millionaires!”

“Millionaires be jiggered! Who talked of millionaires, sir? I spurn the breed; I hate, loath, and spurn it. A man has no call to be a mere slug, a helpless, useless drone of a creature, of no earthly use to any living being, because he doesn’t lay himself out to be a millionaire, no, nor wish to be one either.”

“All very fine, but remember that you and I talk much at our ease—We’re not Irish, and——”

"*I'm* not, thank God, anyway!" interpolated Griggs.

"Be as thankful for that providential escape as you like, only allow me to finish my sentence. If you, I was about to observe, were Irish, and had inherited an Irish land-agency business, I fail to see—politics having gone as we all know they have gone of late years—how you'd have managed to make one bit a better job out of it than poor Kennedy has."

"If I hadn't managed to make a better job out of it, sir, if I hadn't I'd have—Great Scott, I'd have—have drowned myself in the sea yonder, and my seven sons along with me!" Mr. Griggs clenched his fist irascibly at the unoffending ocean in front of him.

"If you had attempted to do anything of the sort your daughter Miss Babs would have pulled you promptly out, and her seven brothers along with you!" laughed Phil.

This time Mr. Griggs himself joined in the laugh. "Upon my soul, I believe she would!" he admitted. "There's some spunk in that girl, whatever breed she comes of, that I'm free to own."

"I wonder what she'll do with herself?" mused the other man.

"Do? Marry some such other d—d slug as her father. What else is there for her to do in this God-forsaken place?"

"I suppose something of that sort has to be her destiny. And yet one never knows. There really is something rather unusual about her."

The business of separating sheep from goats as typified by the contents of Mr. Griggs' dredge, having by this time been accomplished, they again set forth, leaving the unfortunate broad-claw crabs and starfishes to find their

way to the salt water as they could. Whatever may have been the cause, whether due to the unfavourable lie of the ground, or to something more occult, the dredging that afternoon was not a success, and after a few more unsuccessful hauls Mr. Griggs himself proposed an adjournment, and the boat's head was accordingly turned in the direction of Inishbeg.

Upon reaching its pier they found the small Jan, clad in all her white-frilled furbelows, planted firmly upon a step of it, wholly regardless of the appeals of the distracted Hemma, who was making futile clutches at her from the step above. They had barely touched the pier, and the boat stopped, before a little white-gloved hand was laid firmly upon the gunwale, its owner at the same time fixing her eyes with an expression of mingled appeal and indignation upon Gilly, who thereupon suddenly reddened, and plucked Phil Acton by the sleeve as he was about to get out.

“Oh, I say Mr. Phil, do you mind? May Jan come for a little turn with us, just one little turn all by herself, you know. I promised her I'd ask you to take her some day, only I always forgot.”

Phil nodded, and held out a hand. Mr. Griggs, who had already disembarked, glanced for a moment over his shoulder, then walked leisurely away, carrying the more important of his jars and phials with him. Still silently Lady Janetta stepped daintily on board. Hemma, appealing loudly to Mrs. Brown and every other authority, was about to follow, when she was stopped by Gilly.

“You're not to come, Emma. We won't be long. We *weally* won't. Push off, Devitt, please. Get on quick, there's a good man—do.”

They were afloat again in an instant. Phil Acton laughed, rather tickled by his own share of the unpremeditated little escapade, and gathered Jan and her flounces into the shelter of his rugs, an attention which she accepted with her peculiar air of silent graciousness. Satisfaction was by this time written unmistakably upon her face, as she looked round her, and then backwards at the discomfited Hemma.

For her special benefit they took the southern circuit of the island, on the way to the smuggler's cave, the particular object which Gilly, it seems, had promised to show her. Jan's big eyes wandered silently round and round, seizing upon every new object of contemplation. Once she suddenly clutched at Phil Acton's arm with a clutch of irresistible ecstasy, but as a rule she sat perfectly still, as well as silent. It was clear that her joys, unlike Gilly's, had no need of external sharing, but were able to suffice wholly to themselves.

They floated on, skirting the edge of the island, past places where the mesembryanthemums hung over the rocks, as curtains hang over walls during southern festivals; then another turn, and they were looking up a long, narrow creek, steep at the inner end, where a rill of fresh water slipped down in a thin glittering jet, and fell into the sea. Even when the shelter of the island was left behind there were no rollers to-day, the grey gleaming surface heaving slowly around them in wide, almost unbroken undulations. They were close to Gilly's cave now, and could see the two jagged points of rock which guarded its entrance projecting far out on either side like a pair of whale's jaws or crab's pincers. Upon all their previous visits the tide had

been low, and the boat had in consequence gone between another and much lower set of weed-covered rocks. To-day these were covered, and only a pale emerald-coloured streak pointed suggestively here and there to where they lay.

Gilly had joined the other two in the stern, and they sat all three close together, as they slid silently under the arch, and into the smooth, nearly circular basin which lay immediately in front of the cave. By some inexplicable twist of association there darted just then into Phil Acton's mind the unforgettable incident of Shelley and the two children of Mrs. Williams in Lerici Bay, as told by Trelawney ; the solemn uprising of the poet in the frail cockleshell, and his sudden appeal to the scared mother—"Madam, let us now together solve the great mystery!" her agonised remonstrances with the inspired maniac ; finally her leap overboard, the instant sand once more became visible, and her wading back to shore with a child tucked securely under either arm.

He was still smiling over his little literary reminiscence when he was interrupted by a pluck of the arm and a loud scream of joy from Jan, the first audible sign of satisfaction she had given since they started.

"Oh look! look! Gilly-boy—*look!* the little, little boats!"

Both obeyed and looked. Sure enough the entire surface of the inside basin was filled with a fleet of shimmering sky - blue veellas, loveliest of all pelagic wanderers. In that absolutely glassy water their tiny turquoise - coloured membranes could be seen rising like triangular sails over the whole surface, as they swept hither and thither in groups of tens and twelve, an incredibly

dream-like flotilla. Others—opaline-hued these for the most part—were also to be seen, with peduncles and long-trailing organs, carved seemingly out of rock-crystal, and as with the touch of a master. It was more like the flight of some inconceivable variation of butterfly or hummingbird than anything usually associated with the idea of water; a sight in any case to take the eye with a joy that for the time being seemed to seek and to imagine nothing lovelier.

Phil Acton, no less than the two children, could have lingered there watching them for hours. Unfortunately there was the distracted Hemma to be remembered, and, behind Hemma, a vision of Mrs. Brown, the mere thought of whose wrath was causing the masculine soul within him to quake with terror. Reluctantly, therefore, the order was given to put about, and they passed out again between the two projecting rocks, which rose above their heads like a bridge whose keystones had at some period or other got knocked away.

Phil looked round him with a lingering glance as they emerged once more into the wider region. How strange it seemed that two months ago all this familiar little world had been unknown to him, and that in another week or two he must depart, never perhaps to set eyes on it again. How extraordinarily intimate it had grown; how completely part and parcel of himself, of his own life. Mr. Griggs' chosen epithet with regard to it suddenly rose to his mind, and he struck at it mentally with a feeling of hot, and not perhaps wholly rational exasperation. Rotten indeed! Rotten materialism! Rotten conceit! Rotten anything that could make a man suppose all earth, and sea, and sky were able to be summed up, packed away and

settled by a handful of trumpery formula! He looked along the hillsides, dotted here and there with dots of whitewash, and a sudden sense of permanence seemed to travel down to him. This really was enduring, he said to himself, if anything in human life could be called so. Here you reached the bed-rock; here you touched upon a condition of things that varied not, neither shifted with the shifting generations. An impression of the strength of quiescence, of submission, of acceptation, seemed to come floating to him in the lap of the waves, to be repeated in the absorbed look of the clouds overhead, in the silence and serenity of everything above and around. Not a common line of reflection, certainly, for twenty-four, but then a year or two will, we know, under certain circumstances, do the work of many?

He became suddenly aware that Gilly had been gently jogging his elbows for some time in order to attract his attention.

“I say, Mr. Phil, I want to ask you something, Mr. Phil. Don’t you think it would be weally rather nice to have to live in a little house like one of those up there, with no servants, nor—nor—boversome people about, only just you, and me, and Jan, and of course fader and mummy too when they come back from India!”

Phil looked down at him, smiling and amused. It was not the first time that he and Gilly had arrived at much the same point of view along widely different roads.

“We shouldn’t be inconveniently crowded in it, I suppose, should we?” he inquired gravely.

“Oh, well, you might have another one all to your-

self, you know, if you *wanted*! I don't exactly mean one of those along there, but another higher up. You can see ever so much farther, you know, if you're living up there near to the top." A pause, and then—"I did tell you all about Bride Kelly, didn't I? perhaps, though, you wasn't listening. She's a weal, I mean a real friend of mine, a real *great* friend. Her house is close under that big rock you see up there. You can't see it from here because of the way the ground lies. It's an awfully jolly little house, quite clean, at least *very* clean, with no pigs in it, nor nothing, only there's her father. I must say I wish he *wasn't* there! Not that I see him often—hardly ever, in fact—but I can hear him. He's always in the little back room, and we can hear him quite plainly snorting and snoring away through the wall when we're talking. He's a nasty old beast; a regular, nasty, drunken old beast, that's what *I* call him."

Phil was leaning comfortably back against his cushions. Little Jan, silent as ever, was leaning, in her turn, against him. The hour, the heaving of the water, the soft touch of the child's warm body, all were suggestive of silence and of the satisfactions of absolute repose. With a sense of extreme virtue he roused himself, however, to the task of remonstrating.

"Look here, young man, does Mr. Griggs, may I ask, know that you're in the habit of going and sitting for hours in cabins, with nasty drunken old beasts snorting and snoring in the background?"

Gilly got rather red. "He never told me that I wasn't," he said. "He doesn't care what I do, 'cept in the mornings."

"That's no answer. Have you ever told him that you go there?"

"No, I haven't, Mr. Phil. I *would*, though, if he asked me. I weally, *weally* would, but he never did. He only wants not to be bovered by me."

Phil was silenced for the moment. The statement was, as he was well aware, absolutely accurate. Encouraged, Gilly rambled on.

"It's only upon the days that I don't go riding, you know, and that you are not likely to come, that I get Phelim Byrne to put me across, and then I just run up the hill to the Rocking-Stone and pay Bride Kelly a visit. You've no idea what an awfully nice girl she is, Mr. Phil. She weally and truly is—I mean, of course, *for* a girl. I wish you could hear her tell some of her stories. She knows heaps, upon heaps, upon heaps. All about what somebody—I forgot his name, but it begins with an 'O,'—did at the bottom of the sea, and about his talks with St. Patrick ; and all about the King of Ireland's son too ; how he travelled over the world, and who he married, and everything. She's a stunner, a regular stunner at them, and can tell a fellow hundreds upon hundreds. Some of them are sorts of religious things, about saints and such-like stuff ; I don't care much about those, of *course*, but the rest are prime, they weally, I mean really are ; I wish you could get up the hill and hear them, only you couldn't. It's an awfully steep place, the place she lives at."

Phil felt puzzled. It was no business of his, he said to himself. Moreover, he was by no means sure that it wasn't a great deal better for Gilly to climb up the hill, and sit listening to tales about the King of Ireland's son, than to

dawdle about the whole afternoon at Inishbeg, starting every time he heard Mr. Griggs' voice, as he had done that afternoon. He compromised matters finally with himself by resolving to have another talk with that authority, and to suggest to him, as delicately as might be, that there really were other matters in the world quite as much his business, and of very nearly as much importance as his Radiolarians and Diatomæceæ.

"I dare say it's all right, Gilly, only, whatever else you do don't get into the habit of bottling things. Everybody hates bottlers, mind that! Be sure you tell your father the very next time you write to him all about the Rocking-Stone, and about this Miss Bride of yours, and the King of Ireland's son, and the rest of it. Above all, mind you tell him about that very agreeable tipsy gentleman who is always snorting and snoring in the background. Whatever else you leave out, don't leave out that part of the story."

CHAPTER XXI

IN WHICH THE STONES OF KILMACRENAN RISE UP AND FLY AT THE HERO

AS it proved Gilly was destined to see and hear a good deal more of Mr. Lanty Kelly than either he or Phil Acton could at the moment have conceived to be possible!

Some days later he had been again taken upon a dredging expedition by Mr. Griggs. Phil this time had not been one of the party, and the silence in the boat had remained unbroken save by an occasional muttered malediction from Mr. Griggs over that persistent ill-luck which had hindered him from again hitting upon the one golden streak of littoral, which, upon a certain memorable afternoon, had lifted this sand-strewn floor of Kenmare Bay to an exceptionally high place in his estimation.

The proceedings had been further varied on this occasion by a considerable swell, which, as a by-product, had so reduced the colour in the cheeks of the youngest of the party that Mr. Griggs had himself perceived it, and, though the boy said nothing, had proposed to put him ashore, telling him to find his own way back to the landing-place at Kilmacrenan, and so across, as usual, to Inishbeg.

Well contented, Gilly had obeyed. The spot on which he was put ashore was not far from the one where the

previous dredging expedition had landed, and lay almost perpendicularly below the Rocking-Stone. Having seen the boat off, he started, therefore, up the hillside, calculating that there would be plenty of time for him to stand for a minute or two upon it, and to pay a short visit to Bride Kelly, before it would be necessary to turn homewards.

He was clambering monkey fashion hand over hand up the last steep bit, and had halted breathlessly not far short of the cabin, his thoughts running upon his visit, with a side glance towards certain recent remarks of Mr. Phil's upon the subject of bottling, when his attention was attracted by a queer hooting noise, rising occasionally into an ugly sort of howl. He stopped and listened. What was it? It seemed to be coming from somewhere just above him. Who *could* be making such a beastly row up there? he wondered. A final burst of bellowing—not at all unlike what might proceed from some exceptionally ill-tempered bull or bison—and over the ridge immediately above his head an excessively red face, and an uncouth, slouching figure suddenly revealed themselves. Gilly recognised both with a start. They were those of Bride's father.

An odd impression that he was about to be attacked passed through the boy's mind, though why Lanty Kelly or any one else should want to attack him he could not even imagine. Then the lowering glance which had been fixed upon his face was lifted off, and the figure moved on again, swaying perceptibly from side to side, and disappearing almost immediately round a corner.

After another minute's rather startled delay Gilly resumed

his path, and arrived at the door of the cabin. At first it appeared to him to be empty. Bride Kelly was not, as usual, to be seen either moving about it, nor yet sitting with her knitting upon the doorstep. Then he caught sight of her in one of its inner recesses. Something in her attitude made him pause for an instant upon the threshold, as he was about to go in. What was she doing? he wondered. Was she crying? was she saying her prayers, or what was she at, and what made her shoulders go up and down like that? His own shadow, wavering across the dusky floor, caused the girl to turn round, and the next minute she came forward, smoothing down her petticoat, and smiling in her usual friendly fashion at her visitor.

"An' is it yourself, child? Thin you come to the door with no more sound about you nor a small cloud, an' I never caught sight nor stir of you till this minute! 'Twas getting a few handful of grain for the fowls, I was, at the back. Come in wid you, an' sit down."

This explanation, although plausible, did not somehow satisfy Gilly. That something was amiss up there to-day he felt quite sure. The sight of Lanty Kelly upon the hillside; those queer, inhuman howls and hoots that he had uttered, and, even more, that ferocious glance which had been thrown upon himself were all still vibrating within him. As Bride came forward he could see, too, by her face that she had been crying. He waited a minute, trying to resist the impulse to speak, then the wish to know what really was the matter grew too strong, and the words came blurtng out of themselves:

"Bride, I say, Bride, what is it? You've been crying. What's the matter? Do tell me."

But Bride Kelly merely shook her head with a little air of dignity that was innate in her, and was not, perhaps, though unknown to himself, one of the least of her attractions for Gilly.

"Arrah, child, don't you know that poor people does be often having troubles of their own that they don't care to be talking about," she replied with some approach to severity.

For the moment the boy was silenced, and asked no more. Instead he went and fetched his own particular creepy stool, and sat down on it, as he was in the habit of doing, upon the threshold, so as to be able to see what boats were coming up the bay.

Bride went to and fro the cabin at her work, but presently she too came, knitting in hand, to the threshold, and stood leaning her shoulder against the doorpost, her eyes following the same grey ribbon of water with a pleasure no familiarity could ever entirely blunt.

Gilly—still smarting a little under the rebuff which his last remark had brought upon him—was turning over something to say that would re-establish the balance.

"I say, Bride, do you know I shan't be coming here to see you often again," he presently observed. "We've all got to go away soon. Isn't it beastly?"

Bride turned her luminous, somewhat prominent eyes from the water to the small face below her.

"An' where would you be going to, then, child?" she asked; the soft sing-song inflexions seeming to prolong the question.

"Back to England. That's where we came from when we came to Inishbeg, you know."

"To Ingland is it? 'Tisn't never Inglish ye are yourself, anyway?" the girl asked, with an astonishment that could hardly have been greater had it been suddenly broken to her that her small visitor was a Turk.

"Of *course* I'm not; I told you that long ago. Mummy is English, but fader and I are Irish—natuwwally."

"Och, that's the way of it? Well, that's better nor nothing at all, isn't it, honey?"

It was one of the quainter notes of this friendship that no very definite idea as to who her sociable little visitor was had so far penetrated to the girl's mind. On his first visit she had taken him for one of the innumerable Kennedy brood, and although Gilly had carefully explained to her that this was not the case, and had told her his name, and that he was stopping on the island they could see below them to the left, the information had not connected itself with any previous knowledge upon the subject. So few visitors climbed that steep hillside, and her own visits to Kilmacrenan were so few and far between, that local news of every sort took a long time in travelling to her ears.

"Well, well! Sorrow of me soul but that seems a terrible long way to be travelling off to, an' you so young!" Then after a minute, during which her fingers moved briskly over the rough wool, "'Tis missing you I shall be, child, I declare, so I shall, an' you not in it. There does be so few, you see, coming up this ould hill, an' a terrible great way to get down to Kilmacrenan, an' not many there itself that I care to be

spaking to, what with me father, an'—” she stopped abruptly.

“Look here, why shouldn't you come along too, Bride,” Gilly exclaimed. “You weally *might*. I know fader would want it, if he only knew you. You oughtn't to be sticking on all through the winter in this ricketty old place. And next year we shall be coming back again, so that you wouldn't be vewy long away, you know. I say *do* come!” His upturned face grew quite eager over the sudden project.

But Bride Kelly only laughed. “An' who would be looking after me father, an' the chickens, an' the rest of them, an' I running about over the wide world with you, alannah?” she asked. “'Tis them I'd have to be bringing with me, too, I'm thinking.”

Gilly's face suddenly darkened. “I don't like your father,” he said abruptly. “I hope you don't think it rude my saying so, Bride, but I don't. I saw him on the way here. I don't like him one bit!”

The girl only went placidly on with her knitting. “Arrah, child, whist thin wid your foolish talk; what's likings an' dislikings? nothing in life but the idle wind,” she said in a tone of mild reproof. “An' was it to-day you seen him? Sure I know right well the poor man is not himself at all to-day, nor has been this some days past. That's all that's the matter—n'er another thing in life.”

“I only know I thought he was going to chuck something at me. He just stood up there on the hill, and hooted and boo-ed at me like a great bull as I was coming along!”

This time Bride glanced over the knitting with a rather more startled expression. Matters were, in fact, a good bit graver than she had been disposed to admit. An illicit still, which had for some months past been working in comfortable security in a nook of the hill not far from their cabin, had recently aroused suspicions at the nearest police barrack. As a consequence the worm, as the more important portion of it, had been temporarily hidden in a corner of their own potato patch, and by way of return for this convenience a small keg had been bestowed upon its owner. This keg was now, as she knew, all but empty. Her father had been drinking steadily for two days and nights, the consequence of which was that his habitual ill-temper and suspiciousness had increased to a point unprecedented even in her experience of him. He had left the cabin only a short while before, meaning to go up the hill, in the hopes of getting his keg replenished, but he might now, she knew, return at any moment, and the desirability therefore of getting rid of her small visitor before that event occurred became suddenly strongly impressed upon her mind.

“Tis late it does be getting,” she said, looking up at the sky. “Maybe you’d best be travellin’ back wid yourself to where you come from, child, or them that’s belonging to you there will be growing onaisy. Small blame to them either for that same, wid you stravaging about alone over this wild ould hill, an’ it so hard upon dark. Stop a minute, though, for I’m thinking I’ll go wid you meself as far as O’Sullivan’s Cut, so just bide till I turn the pot, the way it won’t be boiling over.”

This done they set off together down the hillside. The idea of his not being able to protect himself at any hour of the day or night would in itself have been fiercely resented by Gilly. He was pleased, however, to have Bride's company for a little longer, and was quite aware that it was high time he got back if he was to reach Inishbeg at the same time as Mr. Griggs.

They went quickly down a steep narrow ravine, strewn with boulders of every shape and size, and traversed by a tiny track which threaded in and out of their tumbled confusion. Although the roughest, it was also very much the quickest way to the landing-place, and Bride on this occasion had selected it on purpose to avoid the risk of meeting with her father, who would, as she supposed, be returning down the same track by which he had gone up.

Unfortunately this proved to be a miscalculation. Lanty Kelly had indeed started intending to cross the nearest ridge to a cottage in the valley beyond, in which the man lived who was responsible for the potheen-making still. With all a drunkard's inconsequent change of purpose it suddenly occurred to him about midway that it would be a great deal better and more prudent to return to the cabin, in order to watch over the precious remains of whisky left in his keg in the inner room. There had been an unusual number of passers-by that afternoon, the sight of whom had worked up his habitual suspiciousness nearly to a pitch of frenzy. He had returned accordingly along one of the innumerable tracks used by the scattered dwellers upon these slopes, a track which brought him, as it happened, immediately above O'Sullivan's Cut almost

at the moment when his daughter and Gilly were in the act of climbing down it.

Who the O'Sullivan was after whom it had been named nobody knew, but whoever he was there could be no doubt he had done his work remarkably cleanly. It was a cleft so narrow as barely to allow of one person slipping down it at a time, and was hewn out of the living rock, with sides as sharp as if slashed with a sword. The short-cut to the Kilmacrenan landing-place led directly down it, and, although the actual drop was not very high, it was so nearly perpendicular that there was always a risk of not checking oneself at the bottom, and in that case of pitching forward over the stone-covered slope beyond. Bride, whose hill-top life had made her as active as any youth of her age, insisted accordingly upon going first, so as to stop the boy before he reached the bottom, from which point onwards his way to the landing-place would be perfectly plain sailing.

She had let herself down the cleft, and was already standing upon the slope below, when her father lurched into sight upon the track immediately above them. Gilly was thus for the moment left standing out alone upon the top, a very conspicuous object in his dark serge suit against the nearly white, lichen-scrawled rocks. Whether their rather unusual-looking little visitor had already come to be associated with some whisky-evoked suspicions in Lanty Kelly's mind, or whether he was merely in the condition of mind in which any unexpected figure—even that of a strange cat or dog—would have seemed a suitable object for attack, it is impossible to say. All that is certain is that he no sooner caught sight of the boy than he began renewing

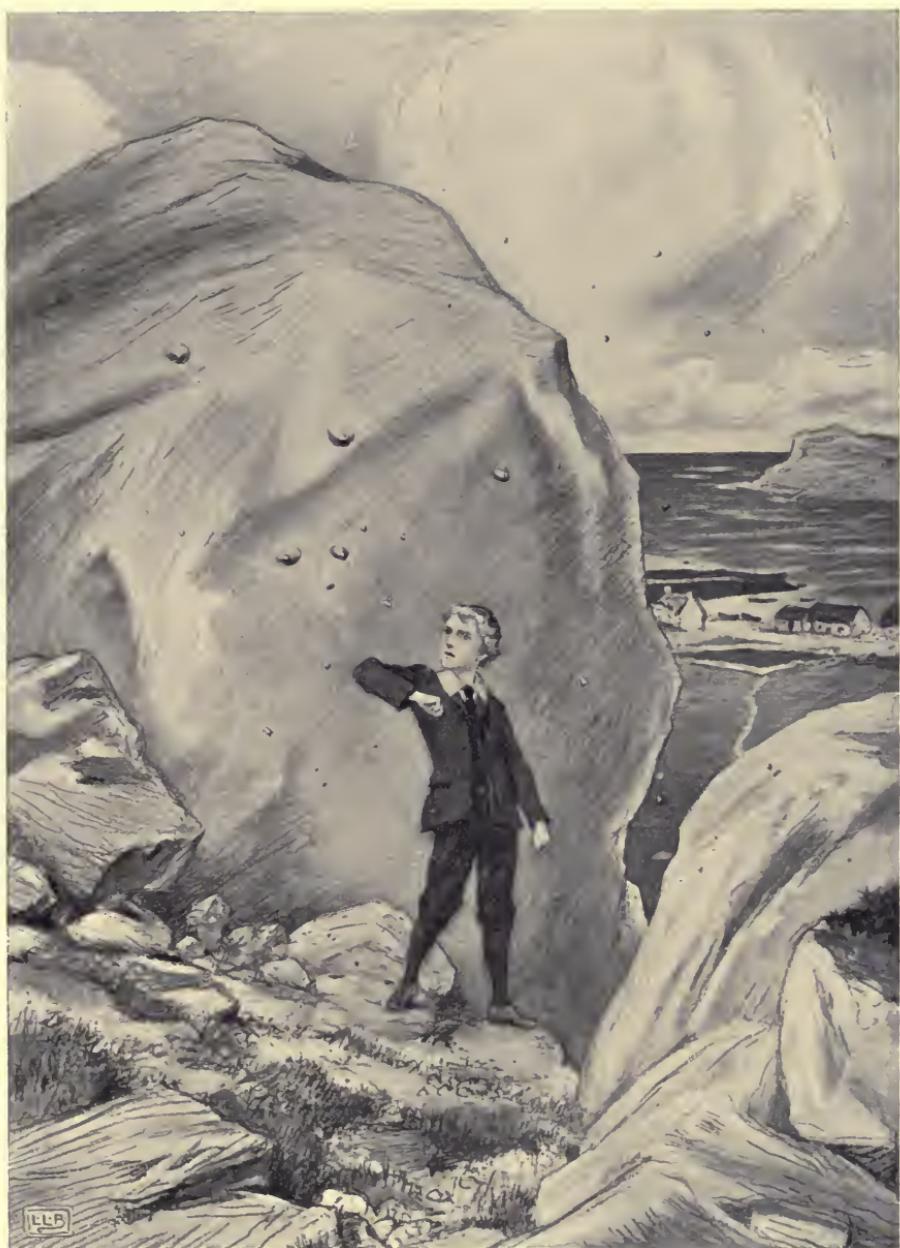
those uncouth, booing, hooting noises which had already once before that afternoon startled Gilly. This time the latter resolved that he was not going to let himself be startled or put out by them, so turned round, and looked up the hillside at his aggressor. Possibly this may have been construed into an act of defiance, for Lanty Kelly's rage thereupon boiled over, and he began groping wildly around him in search of a weapon. There were no lack of these for him to choose from. Stones of every shape and size, from the size of a baby's head to that of a full-grown elephant, lay at hand, and in another minute a casually-assorted handful of these was rattling energetically down the hillside, and falling in considerable numbers around the top of the cleft.

The sides of the slope were so steep and so near to one another that even a drunkard could hardly miss his aim, and before Bride, who, being below, had at first seen nothing, began to realise what was going on, three or four of the smaller of these stones had struck Gilly, one of them upon his cheek, and not far short of one of his eyes.

The hurt in itself was not very severe, but the pain was for the moment considerable, and the anger which it aroused greater still. Other stones, too, and larger ones, were beginning to rattle down, the entertainment being of the kind which, once embarked upon, is much easier gone on with than left off. Beginning to realise that his own position was an impossibly, not to say a ridiculously untenable one, Gilly made haste to let himself drop through the cleft. Not too soon either by any means, for a fresh discharge, this time comprising

several quite respectable-sized fragments, came hurtling down, striking against the ground around the mouth of the cleft, and shooting over it and over Bride's head away to the slope below.

This, the most serious part of the danger that menaced him, Gilly had escaped, but the pace at which he threw himself into the cleft made it quite impossible for him to stop, as he ought to have done, at the bottom. Bride flung herself gallantly forward, and spread her arms out to their widest extent so as to break, if possible, the boy's fall. His weight, however, combined with the impetus that his rapid descent had produced, was altogether too great for her to resist, and they both came to the ground together and rolled over, Gilly, as the lighter of the two, going farthest, and striking first a shoulder and next his head against one of the projecting angles of rock. This, so far as his own conscious participation in them was concerned, was the last of his adventures that afternoon. A succession of wavy curtains—each curtain of a different colour, but each distinctly heavier and more opaque than the last—seemed to be suddenly let down upon him from the sky. Next followed blackness, a blackness like the very pitchiest blackness of midnight, and after that for a considerable period he knew nothing further.



“Other and larger stones were beginning to rattle down.”

CHAPTER XXII

TREATS MAINLY OF LEAVE-TAKINGS, AND IS
SUFFUSED THROUGHOUT WITH A SORDID
TAINT OF GOLD

IT was a little over five weeks later. The intervening time had been largely filled up with alarms, though not with excursions. Now a spell of comparative peace had returned to the harassed dwellers of Inishbeg; their interrupted preparations for departure were being resumed, and in three days more it would again be tenanted only by the Moriartys. Phil Acton had come over for the last time, and he and Mr. Griggs were sitting upon that same bench near the pier which had witnessed the opening of their acquaintanceship.

"This makes matters fairly straight, I take it, between you?" he observed, pointing to a letter which lay upon the bench.

Mr. Griggs grunted. "'Spose so. 'Twas the little un's telegram without the smallest doubt that cleared the air. That I conclude was *your* doing?"

"Not a bit of it, Griggs. Don't go travelling off upon that notion. It was entirely the boy's own. He knew that a regular blizzard of howls and lamentations had travelled to India after that Rocking-Stone affair, and while he was himself still flat upon his back. The telegram was all his own doing, even to the wording.

All I did was to pay for it, and a deuced handsome sum too, but that, I promise you, I shall get out of the family. He told his father that he had never given you the faintest notion of the existence of that agreeable person, Mr. Lanty Kelly."

Mr. Griggs wriggled uneasily upon his bench.

"A nice blind bat of a fool of a tutor his father must have thought he had secured for the boy, too!" he muttered.

This time Phil Acton did not attempt any direct form of consolation, the matter not appearing to him to admit of any.

"He'll be none the worse of the affair once the cut on his face has healed over properly," he said a minute or two later. "All that brain trouble and congestion business has passed off extraordinarily quickly, the doctor says, infinitely quicker than he or any one else would have dared to hope a fortnight ago. Only no long division sums for months to come, mind that, Griggs, and *no* scoldings!"

The other grunted again. "Am I a fool?" he inquired. Then after another minute's silence, "My Aunt Jemima! what a sight he was to be sure that evening the girl brought him back. I hadn't a doubt then but what he was done for for life, even if he lived," and the tutor shuddered, with no simulated shudderings, over the recollection.

"I expect so. He looked middling bad, I must say, when I saw him first the next morning. What a brick that girl was! Fancy her managing to lug that big boy all the way down the hill by herself."

"Yes. The rest of the gang I 'spose only began to collect when she had got him to the bottom. There must have been a good half hundred of them or more by the time old Moriarty and I reached the landing-place. They hadn't dared bring him across, fearing, I suppose, that he might die upon their hands, so they simply laid him down on the ground, and were capering about him like mountebanks; the old women sitting in rows three deep, and raising a hullabaloo enough to chill a man's blood. The only one of the lot that never uttered a word, so far as I heard, was the girl herself. She sat in the middle of them all like a statue, and the boy laid flat across her knees. That was the first sight I had of him. Tell you what, Acton, I made sure then that he was dead."

"It must have made you feel uncommonly sick!"

"You *may* say so! That was the worst pinch of the whole blessed business, so far as I was concerned, though there were some deuced unpleasant ones besides! If you'd only seen the face of old woman Brown when we got in! I swear to you if I'd been Lanty Kelly in proper person she couldn't have looked worse daggers at me, and not a word good or bad could I extract about the boy the whole livelong night. Even when the doctor came in the morning, it was all I could do to have a private word with him! She just hung about, and ground her teeth at me whenever I went near! By that time, however, the worst of the scare was over, praise Providence, as regards the kid himself."

"And Lord Rollo's emissary reached you in time I suppose, for your breakfast?"

"Yes, that was another choice entertainment! By Jingo, yes! He didn't wish to appear intrusive, oh, dear no, not for a single moment, but was he to understand that young Lord Shannagh had really had no one with him at the time of the accident! Was he to inform his employer that Lord Shannagh had been allowed to remain entirely by himself in such a dangerous situation, and at so late an hour of the evening? And the vinegarish airs, too, of the fellow! Only that I was out of sorts, having been up all night and one thing and another, I don't see how I could have kept my hands off him."

"The worst howls over the affair went from that direction, I expect," said Phil.

"I believe you, my boy! You could see by the fellow's venomous face that he meant business. What really astonishes me is that, after all this, any number of telegrams upon the other side should have made the faintest difference!" Mr. Griggs picked the letter off the bench, and began scanning it carefully over from beginning to end. Suddenly he slammed it down again.

"I'll be jiggered if it isn't an extraordinary decent letter for a man to have written under the circumstances, marquis or no marquis," he exclaimed. "Tell you what it is, Acton, if I'd had a kid of my own—an only boy, too—and he'd been as badly mauled as this one was, and not a soul near him at the time, and I paying a fellow, paying him deuced well, mind you, for that very business—well, I'll be jiggered if I'd have written him such a letter as that! No, sir, I'm a truthful man, and it's God's own living truth that I'd have seen him at Jericho, aye, and a pretty sight farther than Jericho, before I'd have written it!" The

tutor's gimlet-like glance showed for a moment a gleam of quite unprecedented emotion.

"I'm glad you feel that he's behaved to you like a gentleman," Phil answered.

"I never said anything of the sort that I know of! I don't take out any particular stock in gentlemen, never have. He's treated me like a man, and if you were to add like a good one, I'd not say no to that."

"Well, call it whatever you like, it was all due to the boy's telegram, that much is certain. Not another soul has written to his father upon the other side, including myself; of that I pledge you my honour."

"All right, I'll take your word for it, and put the little 'un up a peg on the strength of it."

"I expect you and he will hit it off ever so much better after this?" Phil said rather tentatively.

Mr. Griggs ran his fingers vigorously through his bristling hair. "Dunno. Maybe so, maybe not. He ain't *my* sort of boy, y' know, and what's more never will be. Too much of your dawdly, dreamy, suckling-poet style by a long chalk; too much Master Tommy-head-in-air about him for *me*."

"You can't say he's not plucky enough?" Phil said, rather hotly.

"Oh, I never said he was a funk. He's clean bred, I guess; no lack of sand about him. All I say is that he's *your* sort, not *mine*."

And this time Phil Acton was fain to accept the opprobrious verdict without more ado.

A mile away down the coast from that bench a boy that was not at all Mr. Griggs' style of boy was meanwhile

trying to persuade Bride Kelly to leave her home under the Rocking-Stone for a time and to come away with him. He had begun asking for her at a very early stage of his convalescence, but no Bride had then been able to be procured. No sooner had the dark room and the cold compresses been left behind than he again set to work, this time insisting upon being let go up the hill in order to show himself off to her. To this proposal all the authorities, including even Mr. Phil, had refused to listen, but after a prolonged struggle Gilly had so far carried his point that Tim Moriarty had been despatched to the cabin under the Rocking-Stone with an entreaty that, as he could not go up to her, Bride would come down to the nearest point of shore, so that they might have another talk before he left. This the girl had agreed to do, and that very afternoon old Moriarty had himself rowed Gilly in the lesser of the two boats to the point in question. He carried a letter now in his pocket containing a definite permission from his father, and armed with this he began at once upon the point in dispute.

Bride, however, persisted steadily in her refusals. "Don't ask me, child! Arrah, don't ask me!" was all that he could extract out of her.

Gilly, however, did continue to ask her. There was a fine old hereditary fount of obstinacy latent within him, and he had quite set his heart upon this little scheme of his.

"'Tisn't to be with Mrs. Bwown, upon my soul it isn't," he explained more than once. "I dare say you mightn't like that. She does bover a fellow awfully, though she's a good old sort too"—with a recollection of certain com-

fortable moments recently. "But you see fader says that you could stop with *his* old nurse, who doesn't bover people at all, only she's blind—you wouldn't mind that, would you, Bride? And she lives in a jolly little house by herself, and all you'd have to do would be to look after it for her, and when I came to see you, you'd give me tea and heaps upon heaps of griddle cakes, same as you do here."

Despite this alluring, if to her unrealisable picture, Bride was not to be moved, and merely continued to smile and shake her head in a fashion characteristic of her.

"'Deed an' indeed, child, I never heard of no good coming to people through lavin' ould Ireland, 'cept 'twas to America maybe, an' then only becase they couldn't help thimselfs," she told him. "There was a girl I knew went onct with a lady, a nice, *quite* sort of a lady she was, too, an' took her to France an' a power more places, the names of which I disremember. Alicia O'Brien was the girl's own name, living at the time up Ballydoo way, an' whin she got back home wid herself she come up the hill to see me an', 'Bride,' says she to me, 'listen to me, Bride, for what I'm telling you is the truth,' says she. 'The further you gets from Ireland, the further you gets from dacency.' Those I mind me well was her very own words."

"Then I think she was a great, stupid, ignorant girl!" Gilly responded hotly; "*vey* ignorant, and *vey* stupid."

"An' what am I meself but another great, stupid, ignorint girl, child?" was Bride's retort.

Distinctions of this subtle kind were too troublesome for our hero. Bride was his friend, a weal friend, and

that was all he knew about the matter. After another ten minutes of fruitless argument he began to realise that there was no chance of his persuading her, at any rate on such short notice. Mr. Moriarty was getting impatient to be off. The tide was threatening to leave their boat high and dry upon the rocks, and they had therefore to return without delay to Inishbeg.

"Well, good-bye, Bride," he said at last reluctantly. "I wish, I *do* wish you was coming." Neither of them had so much as alluded to the culprit Lanty.

"Good-bye, an' God speed you, honey dear. Don't be long away from us. 'Tis wearying for you every day an' every hour I shall be," the girl had answered.

The boat shoved off, and she followed it with her eyes across the quickly widening water, herself the only living creature to be seen along that whole rock-strewn line of shore. With one hand holding her shawl together, the other shading her eyes, with feet and ankles quite clear of her poor skirt, she stood erect and slim, a figure to have given pleasure to a sculptor. What her thoughts were as she watched the boat, and her impetuous little friend growing momentarily smaller, it were idle even to attempt to guess. Thought is a very formless, as well as an all but entirely inarticulate process in natures like Bride Kelly's, and what is formless and inarticulate is, on the whole, best left to its own vagueness. That no impression of being the victim of any exceptionally harsh or hostile destiny was amongst those thoughts we may at least feel certain. A loneliness enough to stagger the very strongest, a poverty so naked as to be positively startling, these things were neither terrifying nor yet

startling to her. She nodded cheerfully once or twice to her little friend, and her eyes smiled as she watched the boat dip over the low waves, a wind already perceptibly touched with autumn whistling merrily through her threadbare shawl.

The threadbareness of that shawl, odd to say, was in Gilly's thoughts just then, though not in hers, for he had taken hold of it in his eagerness to persuade her, and the thin, thready impression of it had remained behind, so that he seemed to himself to be touching it still. He had serious doubts, moreover, as to her possessing a warmer one, for the resources of the cabin had grown to be fairly familiar to him, and he had never seen any but this. It set thoughts astir which otherwise might have slumbered long, but, once started, were active enough. The notion of, as it were in mere vulgar charity, offering money to Bride Kelly would have been shocking to all his little primitive conceptions of friendship. That no morbid objections to receiving money prevailed in the neighbourhood he was, it is true, fully aware; indeed, Lord Rollo's two sovereigns had long since melted away in sixpences and pennies. Bride, however, was different; Bride was a friend; people were not in the habit, he felt quite certain, of offering pennies or even sixpences to their friends. What did they then do? Some way out of such a stupid, horrid sort of a fix there must, he felt sure, be, but what was it? Happily the authority of authorities was still at hand, and he lost no time in consulting him upon the subject.

“Mr. Phil. I say, do stop a minute and listen to me, Mr. Phil. I have something weakly important this time to

say to you. If a person wants to send something to another person—money, you know, a goodish bit—and if he doesn't want to give it himself, nor yet for nobody to know nothing about it, and if he hasn't got it neither, but has to ask for it from some one who was a tremenjous long way off, what does he do? How does he get it sent safe through to the person he wants to send it to, I mean?"

"There are things called cheques," that exceptionally well-informed person informed him. "Bits of stamped paper, with the amount written on them. You put one of those into a letter, and the person you send it to writes his own name upon the back of it."

"Oh, I see, but afterwards? How does one get the *weal* money out of the bit of paper again?"

"You walk into a bank, and you find there what looks like a counter, and you hold out your cheque across it, and a polite gentleman who is sitting on the other side smiles at you and says, 'How would you like it?' and you answer him in a great hurry, 'Gold, if you please!' and he takes up a small shovel, and sticks it into a pile of gold near him, and sends it rolling away to you across the counter. Heaps of yellow sovereigns come trickling and tumbling one after the other, as many as ever you have a right to."

Gilly's eyes shone with a covetous gleam as they mentally gazed upon this entrancing picture. Then his face fell.

"But there aren't no banks about here, Mr. Phil, and she couldn't ever walk to Kenmare, you know."

"Oh, it's here you want it, is it? Well, any shop will do as well."

"But there aren't no shops neither, you know, 'cept old Mrs. O'Flynn's, and that nasty, dirty shebeen place, and Mrs. O'Dwyer's sister, who sells the sugar-sticks, and —oh, well, just the people at the forge. Besides, then they'd know all about it, and that would be howible."

"Almost anybody who knew you would give the money. Sir Maurice would for one, or, if it was not a very big amount, your friend Doherty could, I've no doubt."

This time Gilly's doubts appeared to be satisfied. Not entirely though, for another and a yet more formidable obstruction suddenly upreared itself.

"But if the person you send it to doesn't want to take it, what are you to do then, Mr. Phil?"

"Ah, there you have me, Gilly! They can always, I am afraid, put it into the fire, and say nothing about it."

"Oh, she wouldn't do that exactly, only—" a pause, ponderous with reflection. Then the thinker's brows cleared.

"People often has to do things that they doesn't vewy much like doing, haven't they, Mr. Phil?"

"They really have, Gilly. And to look pleased while you're doing so is what some people call learning to be a philosopher."

A slight infusion of some such acquirement might not have come amiss upon the following day, when the necessity of going to take leave of his great-uncle, Lord Rollo, confronted Gilly, one which not even the joys of another motor ride could render palatable. That Mr. Griggs would not upon this occasion be called upon to escort his pupil was a conclusion which was silently accepted by all concerned. Instead, the nursery party, the boy found, was to

accompany him, a decision which he heard with no slight inward qualms, and an expectation of extensive and prolonged boverations. To his surprise it proved to be, on the contrary, the saving of him in this direction.

Mindful no doubt of the last occasion of the kind, Lord Rollo had given strict orders that his grand-nephew and grand-niece only were this time to be admitted to his presence. As a consequence, Mrs. Brown and Hemma were unceremoniously deposited in the room that smelt of leather, while Gilly, leading Jan by the hand, had to face unsupported the terrors of the lawn and of its two formidable occupants, the man in the inside and the man on the outside of the great hooded chair.

He thought they both stared at him harder even than before, which, seeing that at least one rather serious incident had occurred to himself in the interval, seemed highly probable, and he began promptly to quake and quiver, having a mortal dread of being cross-examined upon that very subject. He had an ally, however, beside him, one upon whom he would never have dreamt of counting.

Becoming aware of these unworthy quakings and trepidations on the part of her nominal protector, Jan firmly let go of his hand, and stepped across the grass with an air of self-possession which could not have been greater had she been stepping across her own nursery floor. The graciousness—it is hardly too much to say the condescension—with which she received their aged relative's admiring addresses, struck to the roots of Gilly's soul with admiring awe. Such a Jan as this he had never known, never even dimly imagined. How

had she learnt to do it, and where in the world *could* she have picked up such ways, such a manner of speaking, and of holding her head? he asked himself, lost in a maze of masculine bewilderment and helplessness. Even Mr. Griggs' recent wrongs were avenged by the same competent hands, for when half-an-hour later the elegant Mr. Fergusson entered the room in which the party were at tea, and proceeded to address her in an airy, social tone, Lady Janetta's delicate little stare, and her expression of polite but perfectly icy astonishment was a performance so perfect in its way that Gilly found himself under the necessity of seizing and nearly throttling her with his embraces as they were passing a short while later along one of the passages on their way to the motor.

Previously to this the same ritual had been gone through as upon the former visit, Gilly on this occasion going off with no less than four, Jan with one golden token of their great-uncle's generosity. What the destination of those four were to be was a subject which kept the former silent and absorbed during the greater part of their homeward ride. Like many another equally knotty point it resolved itself in the end in an eminently simple and convenient fashion. One of those golden tokens slid bodily, for instance, into Tim Moriarty's pocket, and was there immediately lost to sight and knowledge, as in a cave of impenetrable darkness and secrecy. Another got itself divided between the two humbler Inishbeg men, the lion share being awarded to the friendly Phelim Byrne. There were other people, however, who could not—any more than Bride Kelly

herself — be approached in this naked and unadorned fashion. Here the same trusty counsellor was resorted to, with the result that a hasty missive was despatched to London, and what remained of Lord Rollo's gift, with the exception of one half-sovereign, reappeared in a shape to make Gilly's eyes, and eventually those of its recipients, blink and gape with joyous anticipations. Here were knives of a size, a sharpness, and a many-bladedness such as he had never yet experimented with, or even seen. Other weapons too were there, especially one calling itself a "Myticutter," an ingenious mechanism warranted to cut through the hardest and most seasoned piece of timber—such as the leg of a chair or table—with all the ease and rapidity that might have been expected had it been made of cheese or butter. How much of Mr. Kennedy's surviving furniture would be found available after this last and most endearing specimen of friendship's offerings had been for some time in active exercise, Gilly would have to wait till his next visit to Kerry in order to find out.

"I really would let that one poor lonely thing stay quietly by me if I were you," remarked his counsellor, noticing a significant movement of one of his companion's hands in the direction of his pocket. "You'll be in London, you know, before you go north, and London is one of those places where little things of that sort are sometimes found extremely handy."

This piece of advice was administered upon their last trip of all, Phil Acton having come early that day to Inishbeg on purpose to convey Gilly and Finn in his own boat to the landing-place.

"Oh well, if *you* like. I don't know that *I* think so

vewy much about London *myself*. I've never had much fun there; not what I call a weally out-and-out good time, you know."

"Possibly your good times there may lie in the future."

"Well, perwaps. Some fellows do think a heap of London, I believe, but I don't. 'Tisn't like a bog, you know, not like a weal out-and-out *good* bog. Why, there's a bog off towards Coolgrogan—I don't suppose you ever saw it, did you? it's just as red as fire, the reddest bog anybody ever saw in his life, at least in places. And if you step into one of those places you come out looking exactly the colour of a fox all over from head to foot. It's the best bog *I* know anywhere, and Poldoon he says the same. I say, when will you be coming to London, Mr. Phil? Shall you be there before I leave it?"

"I should say it was highly improbable. They'll be packing you off north as soon as possible, and quite rightly too. I shall have to go there some time, no doubt, if only to ask my doctor how he thinks Dr. Kerry has been treating me all this summer."

"You're heaps better, aren't you, heaps upon heaps? Sir Maurice said you was, yesterday."

"Sir Maurice is a splendid shot and a first-rate fisherman, but I've never heard that he was a member of the College of Physicians."

"Oh well, mind, whatever they say about you, you've got to come back here again next summer. Oh, but you *know* you have! You promised, I swear you promised!" Gilly's voice rose shrill and loud in indignant protest.

"How do you know you'll be coming back yourself?"

"Why, of course I am — natuwally. Fader said so.

I shall be coming lots earlier too than this year, quite early—as soon as ever the hunting is over." The last words were uttered with an ineffable strut.

Mr. Phil dipped his hand into the water beside him and flicked a carefully distributed handful of it over his neighbour, so that he became starred from head to foot with tiny glittering drops. "Hunting, indeed, you conceited little hop-o-me thumb!" he said. "Who do you suppose would take a midge like you out hunting? Why you'd drop into the first ditch they came to, and be lost amongst the sticklebacks and the darklucras at the bottom of it."

"But I am going hunting—*weally* I am." Gilly shook the drops out of his eyes, so as to be able to look up with dignity. "Uncle Ferady's going to take me; didn't I tell you? He's got a house at—. I forget the name of the place; it's not a house, though, he says, it's a box; and I'm to go and stop with him there, and he'll get me a pony of my *vewy* own."

"Mr. Griggs, of course, goes too?"

Gilly wriggled. "Oh, I don't quite know about that! It will be Christmas time, I think. Besides, Uncle Ferady's box is *vewy*, I mean very small; very, *very* small, you see."

"I do see. And what else do you propose to do with yourself in future, may I ask, besides hunting?"

"Oh, heaps upon heaps of things. I say, do you know old Griggs has been ever so much jollier lately, *weally* he has! quite ever so much. He's nearly as—at least no, not in the least bit like that, of *course*—as different as different, only he can tell a fellow lots of amusing things when he likes—about what the red Indians do to their prisoners, how they stick them full of knives

and arrows, and then keep them alive as long as they can—and about how the fellows shoot one another in the drinking-bars out West. They do it geneawally through their pockets, did you know that? And when there's been a weal out-and-out jolly good fight in one of the bars, other fellows — sorts of policemen, you know— go round and smell at the pockets, and any fellow whose pocket smells of gunpowder, why they just take him and hang him straight up, and no questions asked. It's a thundering good plan—keeps them all so lively and nippy, Mr. Griggs says, and *I* think so, too. And— Oh dear, I say, here we are! And look, look! there's the Kennedy's car coming round the corner! I can see Poldoon, and the Snipe, and Desmond all on one side of it, oh yes, and I can see the Pinkeen, too; one of his legs is hanging out, ever so far out over the back of the well—and Miss Babs is all by herself upon the other side driving! They've come, the lot of them, to see me off. Hurroo! Hurroosh!"

THE END

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